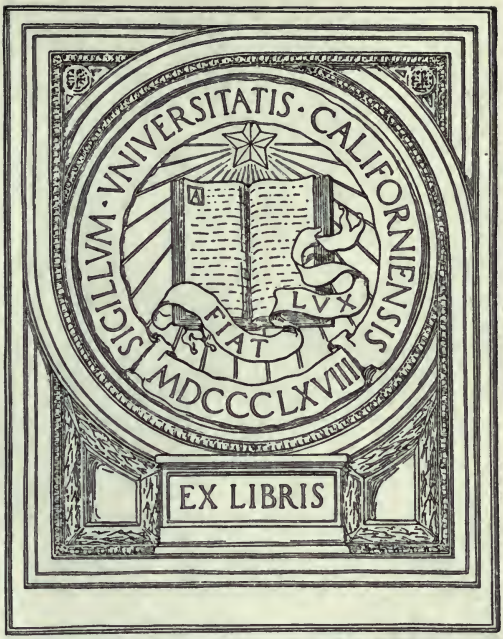
THE ISLES OF SCILLY

THEIR STORY
THEIR FOLK &
THEIR FLOWERS

JESSIE MOTHERSOLE


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The Isles of Scilly

Their Story their Folk & their Flow-ers

PAINTED & DESCRIBED BY

JESSIE MOTHERSOLE

London
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&
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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO

MY MOTHER

MY EARLIEST AND STILL MY BEST FRIEND

M 8828

PREFATORY NOTE

IT has been said that all writers may be divided into two classes: those who know enough to write a book, and those who do not know enough *not* to write one!

In collecting material for these notes on Scilly, I have endeavoured to prepare myself more or less to qualify for the former class; but now that they are complete it is with diffidence that I present them. They are but the impressions of an artist, recorded in colour and in ink, together with so much of the history of the islands and of general description as is necessary to comply with the unwritten law of colour-books.

For my historical facts I am indebted to many writers, ancient and modern. A list of the chief of these appears at the end of the

book, so that my readers may refer, if they wish, to the original authorities.

My best thanks are due to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, for permission to quote his description of the kelping, and for other help he has kindly given me; to my friend Miss Emma Gollancz, for seeing my proofs through the press; and also to the many friends in Scilly from whom I have received assistance and information.

October, 1910.

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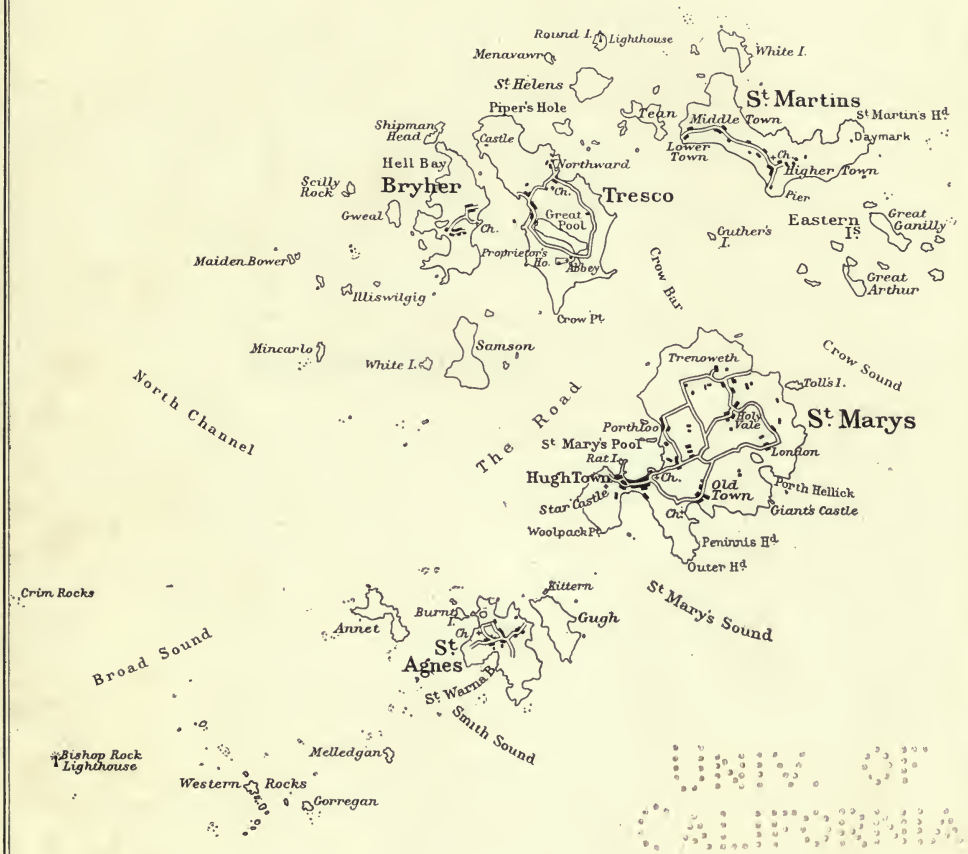
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MAP OF THE SCILLY ISLES

Scale of Miles

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Introductory

I

INTRODUCTORY

A "COLOUR-BOOK" on Scilly needs no apology, so far as the subject is concerned, for there is no corner of Great Britain which more demands or deserves a tribute to its colour than do these little islands, scattered about in the Atlantic, twenty-eight miles from the Land's End.

For they are all colour; they gleam and glow with it; they shimmer like jewels "set in the silver sea." No smoke from city, factory, or railway contaminates their pure air, or dims the brilliancy of their sunshine. They are virgin-isles, still unspoiled and inviolate in this prosaic age, when beauty and charm are apt to flee before the path of progress.

And though their compass is but small, the same cannot be said of their attraction, which

seems to be almost in inverse proportion to their size. Scilly exerts a spell over her lovers which brings them back and back, again and yet again, across that stretch of the "vasty deep" which separates her from Cornwall. In this case it might almost better be called the "nasty deep," for very nasty this particular stretch can be, as all Scillonians know!

Nor do the islands lack variety. There are downs covered with the golden glory of the gorse, with the pink of the sea-thrift, with the purple of the heather; there are hills clothed with bracken breast-high in summer, and changing from green-gold to red-gold as the year advances; there are barren rocks on which the sea-birds love to gather; there are lovely beaches of white sand, strewn with many-coloured shells and seaweed; there are clusters of palm-trees growing with oriental luxuriance, next to fields and pastures where the sheep and cattle feed; there are bare and dreary-looking moors, "the sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyonnesse;" there are stretches of loose sand, some planted with long grass to keep the wind from lifting it, some with a mantle of mesem-

bryanthemum, which here grows wild like a weed;—and all of them seen against a background of that wonderful and ever-changing sea, which is sometimes the pale blue of the turquoise, sometimes the deepest ultramarine; sometimes again shimmering silver or radiant gold. And then in spring there are the famous flower-fields. Let us visit the islands on an April day, and see for ourselves this harvest of gold and silver. For once we will be day-trippers in fancy though we would scorn to be in fact.

Here in Scilly we find land and sea flooded with spring sunshine, while on the "adjacent island" which we have just left every one is lamenting the cold and the rain. The flower-harvest is nearly over, yet still there are wide fields of dazzling white and yellow, and many hundreds of boxes will yet leave the quay for the mainland. The sweet-smelling Ornatus narcissus is now at its best, and its perfume fills the air. Arum-blossoms, thousands of them in a single field, stand stiffly waiting to be cut, while in the more exposed places late daffodils linger, nodding their yellow heads in

the breeze that comes in from the sea. Everywhere there are flowers, flowers, flowers—such a wealth of flowers as one never saw before; and every one is either picking flowers, tying flowers, packing flowers, selling flowers, buying flowers, or talking of flowers. Even the tiny children can tell you the difference between a "'natus" and a "Pheasant Eye"; and will talk wisely in a way to awe the less enlightened visitor of "Cynosures," "Sir Watkins," and "Peerless Primroses."

It is not yet thirty years since these sweet flower-fields first began to cover the islands. The oldest inhabitant, a great-grandmother of ninety-four, can still remember the kelp-making industry which occupied the people in her young days. "Eh," she says, "it was not a nice employ; things are better as they are." And we can easily believe that she is right; for instead of the fragrance of the flowers the air was then filled with the thick and acrid smoke of the burning seaweed; and it was but a poor living at the best that could be made out of it.

There is now hardly a boatman in the islands



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who does not add to his income by having a patch of ground planted with the "lilies," as they call them, and sending his boxes of blooms to market during the season.

But flower-growing is not the only industry of the islands. If you ask your boatman to name others as they affect himself he will probably answer naïvely, "Fishing and visitors;" and he may also add that sometimes he is employed as a "potter." Although the dictionary allows no other meaning to this word than "a maker of earthen vessels," let not your imagination be betrayed into picturing a lump of wet clay and a flying wheel! It is crab- and lobster-pots that are in question, and quantities of these crustaceans are caught round the islands and sold to French merchants.

Then there is the mackerel fishery, which is at its height in May and June, when St. Mary's Pool is full of the picturesque, brown-sailed fishing-boats from Mount's Bay.

The other "industry" mentioned by the boatman, that is to say "visitors," is carried on intermittently all through the year, but

is naturally most active during the spring and summer months.

In the summer there are cheap day-excursions from the mainland, and crowds of trippers arrive at St. Mary's by steamer to spend a few hours on the islands. Some of them land in such a woe-begone condition that they are fit for nothing but to lie about on the benches in the "Park" until the hoot of the steamer rouses them to crawl back to the quay. Others, more courageous in spite of having had a "sick transit," will only stop to snatch a morsel of food before rushing off to the steam-launch for Tresco, where they will make the round of the famous gardens, walk perhaps to Cromwell's Castle, and return to St. Mary's dead-beat, just in time to go on board for the homeward journey. And they call that a day's holiday! But these are not the visitors to bring grist to the boatman's mill. The kind he wants are those who come to stay; those who come again year after year, and who delight in sailing about amongst the islands and learning to know and love them well. They do not come looking for "Entertainments" with a capital E. They

are quite content with the magical music of the wind and the waves, and with the natural beauties that surround them on every side.

These visitors are neither so many nor of such a kind as to take away from the peaceful charm of the place. You can always get peace and quiet in Scilly, even in the most "trip-perish" season, for the trippers follow a beaten track which it is easy enough to avoid. And the islands are, fortunately, quite unspoilt by any efforts to cater for their supposed wants. Not a single penny-in-the-slot machine flaunts its vermilion and yellow in your face; there are no niggers on the beach, nor brass bands, nor cinematographs; no dancing on the pier; no "marine parades" or "esplanades"; above all, here are no artificial "natural attractions" (most hateful of paradoxes), no manufactured show-places to pander to perverted taste. If you come hoping for these things you will go away (and the sooner the better for all concerned) disappointed. You would only be an alien in this little Paradise.

There are many who will sympathise with this description of the islands taken from a

visitor's book: "A Paradise surpassing Dante's ideal, but alas! only to be attained by passing through three and a half hours of Purgatory." For the voyage from Penzance to Scilly is not one to be treated lightly. Looked upon as a pleasure trip, it may be enjoyable or the reverse, according to the weather and the constitution of the passenger; but considered in the light of a test of "good-sailor"-ship it is, I think, without a rival. Do not be set up because you have travelled unscathed to Australia and back, or crossed to America without turning a hair. This little bit of the Atlantic may yet humble you! There seems to be something in the cross-currents between Scilly and the Land's End which tries the endurance of even the most hardened sailors. How often does one hear it said in Scilly, "I used to think I was a good sailor, but——;" and that "but" speaks volumes! Even sea-captains, regular old sea-dogs who have spent a lifetime afloat, have been known, to their shame and disgust, to fall victims to Neptune on the Scilly passage. I never made a voyage in which less (or should

I say more?) was expected of you. The steward gives you a friendly peep at intervals. "Feeling all right, I hope?" You never felt better in your life, and say so. "Well, please hold out as long as you can; my supply is limited." And you almost feel that it would be ungenerous to disappoint his evident expectations by "holding out" to the end!

But what matters three and a half hours of Purgatory when once one has attained to Paradise? And the passage weighs as nothing in the scale against the charms of Scilly.

In the "good old days" things were very different from what they are now. You could not then make the return journey in the same day. Sailings were few and far between, and people prepared for going to Scilly as for a long voyage.

In Lieutenant Heath's time (1744) the passage was seldom made more often than once a month or six weeks in summer, and not so often in winter; and he says that as it was made "in small open fisher-boats amidst the running of several cross-tides, the

passengers are forced to venture at the extreme hazard of their lives when necessity or duty calls them." And these passengers "should be qualified," he continues, "to endure wetting on the weather like so many Ducks; however, the Boatman undertakes to empty the water with his Hat or what comes to Hand without the least Concern." Half a century later Troutbeck writes that the inhabitants "want a constant, regular, and even monthly communication with England," chiefly for the sake of getting food. A strong proof of the uncertainty that attended the journey in those days is that in 1793 the "Prudence and Jane," coming from Penzance to Scilly with necessaries, was driven by a contrary wind to Cherbourg in France! Nowadays it may happen in very exceptionally stormy or foggy weather that a Scillonian's Sunday dinner does not arrive till Monday, but at least it never goes to France!

When Woodley wrote in 1822, the crossing was made every week, but even then a "good passage" took eight or nine hours, and sometimes the vessel was delayed at sea for thirty-six to forty-eight hours, without any provision of

food for the passengers. There is an old lady now living on St. Mary's who told us that the first time she visited the mainland the crossing took twenty-four hours, and then they were landed at the Mousehole and had to walk the three miles into Penzance.

It was not until 1859 that the sailing-vessels were replaced by a small steamer.

Now the Royal Mail Steamer "Lyonnesse" makes the return journey every day in the summer; and although she may not be perfection, she is reckoned absolutely safe. The distance from Penzance is generally covered in about three and a half hours; but the proprietors reserve to themselves the right to "tow vessels in distress to any other port or place without being chargeable with any deviation of the voyage, or being liable to make compensation to any Passenger;" so if under these circumstances you were taken to Kamschatka you would have no right to complain!

I know of one passenger who was taken out nearly to the Bishop Lighthouse on account of a vessel in distress. Far from complaining, she enjoyed the excitement of the adventure;

but such happenings are rare and need hardly be taken into account.

The notice posted on the quarter-deck of the "Lyonnesse" leaves one in a happy state of doubt as to whether passengers or merchandise are the least acceptable. "This Quarter Deck contains 1,014 square feet and is certified for 112 passengers when not occupied by cattle, animals, cargo, or other encumbrance."

But that passenger would be churlish indeed who had any fault to find with the way in which he was treated by the officials, whether on sea or land. From the highest to the lowest they are as courteous as one could wish—unless, of course, they are provoked to turn, like the proverbial worm.

There is a stoker on the "Lyonnesse" with a portly and majestic figure; but woe to the ill-bred passenger who tries to raise a laugh at his expense! Once such a passenger saw the stoker looming across his field of vision, and, in spite of being curled up and woebegone with sea-sickness, he aimed at him a feeble joke.

"You'd make a splendid advertisement for Mellin's Food."

The stoker stopped, and let his eye travel slowly over the speaker. Then came his retort, with withering scorn.

"Well, and you'd make a first-rate advertisement for Keating's Powder; for anything more like a *dying insect* I never did see in all my life."

Whereupon the "dying insect" looked his part more than ever, and was silent.

The Great Western Railway Company once offered to run a fast service of steamers in connection with their trains on condition that they might build a luxurious hotel on St. Mary's; but the Governor was too wise to consent. Scilly does not need to be revolutionised and popularised and advertised. She is so very charming as she is.

So blessed be the "Lyonnesse," and long may she continue to reign supreme over that part of the Atlantic; perhaps until the time when we shall be flying across from Penzance, and looking back with horror on the days of sea-passages, even as we now look back to the days of the sailing-vessels.

Historical


JM

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II

HISTORICAL

A WELL-KNOWN writer has spoken of the Scilly Isles, as "patches of rock, dignified by historical and political associations;" and one is surprised to find, considering their small size and their isolated situation, how very frequently they do figure in the pages of history.

They were included with the mainland when the Romans took possession of Britain, and possibly their conquerors introduced Christianity here as elsewhere after they themselves had been converted. This is only guesswork. Strangely enough the first Christians whom we actually know by historical records to have landed in Scilly were heretics, sent there into exile by the Emperor Maximus for their unorthodox opinions. These were Bishops

Instantius and Tiberianus, who were convicted of the Priscilline heresy in A.D. 384 and sent to "insula Sylina, quae ultra Britannias est," as we learn from Sulpicius Severus, who wrote only twenty years after the event.

After the Romans had left Britain (A.D. 410) the islands probably remained, like West Cornwall, independent of the Saxons; and when four centuries later the Northmen came to harry the country, they were joined by Welsh and Cornish Celts, glad of the chance of a blow at their common foe the Saxon. Scilly was then used by the Northmen as a sort of "naval base," from which expeditions were made against the mainland. King Athelstan sent a fleet to oust them in 927, and left a garrison on the largest island; afterwards, in fulfilment of a vow, he founded a collegiate church at St. Buryan in Cornwall to commemorate his conquest.

It is uncertain at what date the Benedictine monks first came to Scilly. Some say it was in 938.

According to the Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason there was on Tresco in his time "a

famous abbot, the head of a great cloister." The story goes that the young Viking, in about the year 993 came harrying the coasts of England with a fleet of ninety-three ships, and was driven by contrary winds to the Isles of Scilly. Here he heard of a wonderful Christian hermit, who lived in a cell among the granite rocks and was said to possess the power of prophecy.

Olaf was then in the position of a seeker after truth. He was inclined towards the religion of the Christians, but he had never acknowledged himself as one of their number.

He was seized with curiosity to test the powers of the hermit, so he dressed up one of his tallest and handsomest followers in his own armour and bade him go to the cell and pretend he was the king. The disguise was quite useless. "You are no king," said the hermit, "and I advise you to be faithful to your King."

On the strength of this proof, Olaf went himself to the cell to make inquiries concerning his own future. The hermit foretold that he should not only become a renowned king and

perform many famous deeds, but that (far greater honour!) he should lead many into the true Christian faith. And for a sign he told him that on returning to his fleet he would meet with foes, a battle would be fought, he would be wounded severely and be carried on a shield to his ship, but would recover after seven nights and would soon after be baptized.

Events happened just as had been predicted, and Olaf was so much impressed that as soon as he had recovered from his wound he put himself under the hermit's instruction, and enrolled himself as a servant of the God of the Christians.

Afterwards he went to Tresco, where was "a famous abbot, the head of a great cloister," who with his brethren came down to the shore to meet the King and welcome him with all honour. They gave him further instruction in the Christian faith, and finally he and all his company were baptized.

He appears to have spent several years in Scilly; and when he returned to Scandinavia, it was to devote his energies to preaching, in

his native land and in Iceland, the Gospel which he had learnt to love in these remote islands.

Such is the story as told by Snorri Sturluson, the Icelandic historian, in 1222. We must not rely on the accuracy of his details; for example, the "great cloister" to which he refers was probably only a cell of two Benedictine monks. But there is little doubt that he followed a trustworthy Scandinavian tradition in placing the conversion of their hero Olaf in such an out-of-the-way and little-known spot as Scilly.

So in these little islands there was lighted a torch which kindled the flame of Christianity in far-distant lands.

The Abbey on the island of Tresco was appropriately dedicated to St. Nicholas, the patron-saint of mariners. By the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042–1066) the monks had acquired the tithes of all the islands, and the exclusive ownership of St. Elid's (St. Helen's), St. Sampson, St. Teon (Tean), Reutmen and Nurcho, the two last of which cannot be identified.

Scilly is not mentioned in Domesday Book; but we find King Henry I. granting to the

Abbot of Tavistock "all the churches of Sully with their appurtenances." Later, Reginald Earl of Cornwall confirms this grant, with all wrecks "except whale and a whole ship."

In another grant all the tithes of Scilly (and particularly of rabbits!) are given to the monks by Richard De Wich "for his soul, and the souls of his parents, and of Reginald Earl of Cornwall his lord." There is something pitifully ludicrous in this special inclusion of tithes of *rabbits* in the price paid for the salvation of human souls.

The right of the Abbots of Tavistock to the shipwrecks was challenged by King Edward I. in 1302, and upon inquiry the jury found that the Abbot and all his predecessors had "enjoyed" from time immemorial all the wrecks that happened in Scilly, except gold, whale, scarlet cloth, and fir or masts, which were reserved to the King.

An author of the last century says, with a cheerful belief in human nature: "Perhaps the right of wreck was given to the convent for the purpose of attaching an increased degree of merit to their prayers in favour of ships

likely to be dashed against those rocks." But surely, from another point of view, it was putting rather an unnecessary strain upon their virtue!

Of the secular government of Scilly, there are from time to time fragmentary records.

In 1248 Henry III. sent a Governor, Drew de Barrentine, with command to deliver every year seven quarters of wheat to the King or his agent.

King Edward I. in 1306 granted the Castle of Ennor in Scilly to Ranulph de Blankminster, in return for his finding and maintaining twelve armed men at all times for keeping the peace in those parts. This Castle of Ennor is identified with Old Town Castle on St. Mary's, of which only the smallest vestiges remain.

Ranulph de Blankminster also held the islands for the King, paying yearly at Michaelmas three hundred puffins, or six shillings and eightpence. Puffins must have been cheap in those days! In 1440 we find the rent is still six and eightpence, but fifty instead of three hundred puffins are reckoned the equivalent. Poor puffins! had their numbers really dwindled

so much in 134 years by their constant contribution to the rent-roll that they were six times more difficult to obtain? I hope it was only that they had become more wary and expert in the art of being "not at home" when the rent-collector called.

But this is a digression from the sober paths of history.

In this same reign, Edward I., the monks of Tresco Priory made an appeal to the King representing their need of proper defence from the attacks of foes. The King granted them letters of protection, which were particularly addressed to "the Constable of the Castle in the isle of Ennor," who seems, therefore, to have been the chief secular authority in the islands at the time.

Ranulph de Blankminster appears to have fulfilled but ill his half of the compact with the King, for only two years after it was made we find William Le Peor, Coroner of St. Mary's, making complaint of him that instead of keeping the peace he entertained rogues, thieves, and felons, and with their help committed many abuses. The King appointed a

commission to inquire into the matter; but we do not learn that anything was done. The practical result of the complaint was that William Le Peor was thrown into prison by Blankminster at Le Val (supposed to be Holy Vale on St. Mary's), and made to pay one hundred marks. So it is to be feared that he had plenty of leisure to regret his interference in the cause of justice. Judgment was rough and ready in those days. An old record of the twelfth year of Edward I. tells of the drastic treatment of felons. "John de Allet and Isabella his wife hold the Isle of Scilly, and hold there all kind of pleas of the Crown, throughout their jurisdiction, and make indictments of felonies. When any one is attainted of any felony he ought to be taken to a certain rock in the sea and with two barley loaves and one pitcher of water upon the same rock they leave the same felon, until by the flowing of the sea he is swallowed up."

At the height of the French Wars of Edward III., the two monks of Tavistock who lived on Tresco must have found their position uncongenial, for they sought and

obtained from the King permission to hand over their duties to two secular chaplains, who should perform divine service daily and celebrate the mass, while they themselves retired to the more peaceful cloisters of Tavistock.

More than a century later, we get another proof that the islands were not always an "eligible situation." Richard III. ordered an inquisition of them to be taken in 1484, when it was shown that they were worth 40s. a year in peaceable times, and in times of war *nothing!*

The next important record of the islands comes from John Leland, library keeper to King Henry VIII., and the greatest antiquarian of his time; also the greatest "tourist," for he was empowered by the King to search for objects of antiquity in the archives and libraries of all cathedrals, abbeys, and priories; and he spent six years travelling the country to this end: his "Itinerary" began in 1533. His notes on Scilly are so interesting that I cannot refrain from quoting them in full:—


Jessie Mothersole.

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"There be countid a 140 islettes of Scylley that bere gresse, exceding good pasture for catail.

"St. Mary Isle is a five miles or more in cumpace; in it is a poor town, and a meately strong pile; but the roves of the buildings in it be sore defacid and woren.

"The ground of this isle berith exceeding corn; insomuch that if a man do but cast corn wher hogges have rotid, it wyl cum up.

"Iniscaw longid to Tavestoke, and ther was a poore celle of monkes of Tavestoke. Sum caulle this Trescaw; it is the biggest of the islettes, in cumpace a 6 miles or more.

"S. Martines Isle.

"S. Agnes Isle, so caullid of a chapel theryn.

"The Isle of S. Agnes was desolatid by this chaunce *in recenti hominum memoria.* The hole numbre of v. housoldes that were yn this isle cam to a mariage or a fest in S. Mary Isle, and going homewarde were al drownid.

"Ratte Island.

"Saynct Lides Isle wher yn tymes past at her sepulchre was gret superstition.

"There appere tokens in diverse [of] the islettes of habitations [now] clene doun.

"Gulles and puffinnes be t[aken in] diverse of these islettes.

"And plenty of conyes be in diverse of these islettes.

"Diverse of [these] islettes berith wyld garlyk.

"Few men be glad to inhabite these islettes, for al the plenty, for robbers by the sea that take their catail by force. These robbers be Frenchmen and Spaniardes.

"One Davers a gentilman of Wilshir whos chief house at Daundesey, and Whitington, a gentilman of Glocestreshire, be owners of Scylley; but they have scant 40 marks by yere of rentes and commodities of it.

"Scylley is a kenning, that is to say about xx. miles from the very westeste pointe of Cornwalle."

The following additional notes on Scilly are also found amongst Leland's papers:—

"Ther be of the Isles of Scylley cxlvii.

that bere gresse (besyde blynd rokkettes) and they be be estimation a xxx. myles from the west part of Cornewale.

"In the biggest isle (cawled S. Nicholas Isle) of the Scylleys ys a lytle pyle or fortres, and a paroch chyrche that a monke of Tavestoke yn peace doth serve as a membre to Tavestoke Abbay. Ther be yn that paroch about a lx. howseholdes.

"Ther is one isle of the Scylleys cawled Rat Isle, yn which be so many rattes that yf horse, or any other lyving best be browght thyther they devore hym. Ther is a nother cawled Bovy Isle.

"Ther is a nother cawled Inisschawe, that ys to say the Isle of Elder, by cawse yt berith stynkkyng elders. Ther be wild bores or swyne."

Leland appears to have jotted down his notes as the information was given him on the spot; and the fact that his informants were not always agreed would account for some discrepancies and repetitions. He did not live long enough to arrange his notes. A very short time after his visit the "poore

celle of monkes" ceased to exist. With the dissolution of monasteries in 1539, the Abbey of Tavistock fell, and its lands in Scilly passed to the Crown.

Another ten years, and we find the islands being used as a pawn in the game of a man of high ambitions. Lord Admiral Seymour, the brother of the Lord Protector, was accused, in a bill of attainder brought against him in 1549, of having entered into relations with the pirates of the Channel, forged cannon, collected money and munitions of war, and "gotten into his hands the strong and dangerous isles of Scilly." On these and other charges he was put to death.

In the same year, 1549, the name of Godolphin occurs for the first time in the annals of the islands, as that of the captain of the group; and in 1571, Queen Elizabeth leased the islands to Frances Godolphin at a yearly rent of £10, "with power and jurisdiction to hear and finally to determine all plaints, suits, matters, actions, controversies, contentions, and demands whatever, which shall happen to be depending between party

and party within any of the said isles," heresies, treasons, matters of life and limb and land, and Admiralty questions alone being excepted. At the same time he was ordered and encouraged to keep the islands in a proper state of defence. To this end many batteries were erected on St. Mary's, and Star Castle was built on the summit of the "Hugh" in 1593.

The next grant of Scilly was to Sir William Godolphin, for fifty years from 1609 to 1659; he was to pay £20 a year and to receive one last of gunpowder every year for their defence, with the condition that he should not "give or bequeath any of the said isles unto any of his daughters," because they were considered incapable of defending them. Later on the possession of an able-bodied husband seems to have been sufficient to qualify a daughter to inherit.

In the struggle between King and Parliament, Scilly more than once afforded a refuge for the Cavaliers, and was finally their last retreat.

In March 1646, when General Fairfax had

defeated the King's forces in Cornwall, Prince Charles fled from the Castle of Pendennis to Scilly, and was lodged in Star Castle. The chair on which he sat there may still be seen in Holy Vale, to which place it has been removed.

Two days after his landing he sent Lord Colepepper to France to acquaint the Queen, "with the wants and incommodities of the place," and to desire "a supply of men and moneys."

We get a glimpse into the "incommodities of the place" from the *Memoirs of Lady Fanshawe*, whose husband was in attendance on the Prince. She was set on shore almost dead after having been robbed by the seamen with whom they sailed from the Land's End.

She writes: "When we had got to our quarters near the Castle where the Prince lay, I went immediately to bed, which was so vile that my footman ever lay in a better, and we had but three in the whole house, which consisted of four rooms, or rather partitions, two low rooms and two little lofts, with a ladder to go up: in one of these they

kept dried fish, which was his trade, and in this my husband's two clerks lay, one there was for my sister, and one for myself, and one amongst the rest of the servants. But when I waked in the morning I was so cold I knew not what to do, but the daylight discovered that my bed was near swimming with the sea, which the owner told us afterwards it never did so but at spring-tide."

Poor comfort to be told this when it happens to be the season for the highest spring-tides! Nor was this all that the poor lady had to suffer, for she goes on to say: "With this, we were destitute of clothes; and meat and fuel for half the Court, to serve them for a month, was not to be had in the whole island; and truly we begged our daily bread of God, for we thought every meal our last. The Council sent for provisions to France, which served us, but they were bad, and a little of them."

These privations had to be endured for six weeks, at the end of which time the Prince, despairing of receiving reinforcements, embarked for Jersey and thence to France.

The islands were left under the governorship of Sir John Granville, who held them in the King's name till 1651, harassing the merchant-shipping, and capturing English and Dutch vessels that passed that way.

With the avowed object of demanding satisfaction for acts of piracy, the Dutch Admiral, Van Tromp, descended on Scilly with twelve men-of-war; but he had private orders to treat with the Governor for the handing over of the islands to the Dutch. Sir John was too loyal to listen to these proposals, whereupon Van Tromp tried to disguise the real nature of his overtures by pretending he had only wanted to get possession of the islands in order to restore Charles II. to his rights.

At length in 1651, after frequent complaints of the "pirates" of Scilly had been laid before Parliament, a fleet was sent under the command of Admiral Blake and Sir George Ayscue (Ascue, Ayscough, or Askew, I have never seen it spelt twice alike) to bring the islands into subjection. After the fleet had arrived

within the roadstead, a day was lost through the treachery of a pilot called Nance, who, although "the most knowing pilot" of the place, led them to Norwithel, "affirming on his life" it was Tresco. Surprised, and exposed to the enemy's fire, the Parliament men retreated to Tean, effecting a landing on Tresco the following day.

Here they took possession of an old breast-work on Carn Near, and erected an advanced battery to command Broad and Crow Sounds. It could reach any ship that went into or came out from St. Mary's Harbour, and generally with effect, for ships must often pass very near in order to avoid rocks or flats. The King's party in consequence soon became so distressed that a messenger was sent for orders to the Prince in Holland, and brought back permission from him for the cavaliers to surrender and make the best terms they could for themselves. Eight hundred soldiers were taken prisoner with Sir John Granville, and officers "enough to head an army."

Soon after the reduction of the islands, a strong circular tower, now known as Oliver

Cromwell's Castle, was built on Tresco. It was so placed, low down on the shore, that its guns could sweep the surface of the water for a great distance. It was constructed in part from the materials of a much older fortress on the hill above, called Charles's Castle, a building of great strength, but in an unfavourable situation for defence.

After the Restoration, when the Godolphins were again in power in Scilly, Duke Cosmo records that the garrison on St. Mary's was reduced from six hundred to two hundred men. He mentions also that twenty soldiers were employed to guard Cromwell's castle (or "the Castle of Bryer," as he calls it). Later this fortress was allowed to fall into decay, for in 1740, when England was at war with Spain, it had to be "put into a state of good defence," but apparently no garrison was kept there for long, and it again suffered from neglect.

During this same war with Spain, many batteries were erected on the Hugh of St. Mary's (now known as Garrison Hill), and a strong entrance gateway to the fortifications was built in 1742.


Jessie Mathers

Since then the military establishment seems to have been gradually reduced. In 1822 it consisted only of a lieutenant-governor, a master-gunner with four others under him, and two or three aged sergeants. In 1857 "five invalids" manned the fortifications, and in 1863 the fort was dismantled.

Seeing that the guns removed at that date were chiefly salvage from the wreck of the "Colossus," lost near the western rocks in 1777, and had been lying under water for fifty-four years before they were placed on the batteries, it is perhaps just as well that they were never required for active service!

Within recent times the Government decided to make of Scilly a naval base, but after spending five years and a quarter of a million of money on constructing new batteries they discovered in 1905 that the firing of the guns would bring down the houses of Hugh Town. So again the fortifications have been abandoned, and the history of Scilly as a centre of warfare appears to have come to an end.

Peace has reigned there since the days of Cromwell, but it has not always been peace

with plenty as it is nowadays. The islanders have passed through hard times before arriving at their present state of prosperity; the history of these vicissitudes, however, belongs to another chapter.

Former Industries

III

FORMER INDUSTRIES

FOR many years the condition of the people of Scilly was not an enviable one. Their isolated situation without any regular communication with the mainland, threw them for long periods upon their own resources, which were very limited. They lived by agriculture, fishing, "kelping," and piloting, with some admixture of smuggling; but sometimes their services as pilots would not be required for months together; their crops, their kelp, and their fishing would fail, and their smuggling ventures miscarry, and then they would be in a sorry plight, and in danger of famine.

Under these circumstances we cannot wonder at an Order of the Council, issued in 1740, forbidding the exportation of corn; for the islanders used to sell everything they could

to passing ships, and not keep enough for themselves.

Another order is more puzzling. It prohibited all masters of ships or boats "to import any stranger to settle here, or to carry any person from the islands" under penalty of a fine of ten pounds. It is easy to understand why strangers might not be imported; but since Scilly was supposed to be over-populated at that time, why were the islanders not allowed to leave? This was indeed turning the islands into a prison, and giving a real ground for Heath's quaint supposition:—

"Here is no prison," he writes, "for the confinement of offenders, which shows that the people live upright enough not to require any, *or that the place is a Confinement of itself.*"

Smuggling was a very popular employment. It was so easy to slip over to France and return with a cargo of contraband goods, which could be dropped overboard attached to a buoy if the revenue-officer inconveniently appeared. Even the clergy engaged in the traffic. It is said that Parson Troutbeck, who speaks feelingly of the drunkenness occasioned

by smuggling, was himself obliged to leave the islands from fear of the consequences of having taken part in it. The Parsonage on Tresco was originally built in a spot especially convenient for this trade, although not otherwise suitable; and one of its tenants had also to run away because he was mixed up in some smuggling affair.

In 1684 a new industry had come to the aid of the people. Kelping was introduced by a Mr. Nance from Cornwall, and for nearly one hundred and fifty years formed one of their chief employments.

Kelp, as every one knows, is an alkali, of value to glass-makers, soap-makers, and bleachers, and obtained by burning seaweed, or "ore-weed," as they call it in Scilly.

I am tempted to commit a bold piracy and quote in full the vivid description of the kelping given by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch in *Major Vigoureux*, for I could never hope to rival that description in its force and picturesqueness. It occurs in a romance, but all its facts are based on contemporary records, and are strictly true to life.

"All the summer through, day after day, at low water, the islanders would be out upon the beaches cutting the ore-weed, and, as the tide rose, would drag it in sledges up the foreshore, and strew it above high-water mark, to dry in the sun. On sunny days they scattered and turned it; on wet days they banked it into heaps almost as tall as arrish-mows.

"From morning until evening they laboured, and towards midsummer, as the near beaches became denuded, would sail away in twos and threes and whole families, to camp among the off-islands and raid them; until when August came and the kelping season drew to an end, boat after boat would arrive at high water and discharge its burden.

"These operations filled the summer days; but it was at nightfall and a little earlier that the real fun began. For then the men, women, and children would gather and build the kilns—pits scooped in the sand, measuring about seven feet across and three feet deep in the centre. While the men finished lining the sides of the kiln with stones, the women and girls would leap into it with armfuls of furze, which they

lighted, and so, strewing the dried ore-weed upon it, built little by little into a blazing pile. The great sea-lights which ring the islands now make a brave show and one which the visitor carries away as the most enduring, most characteristic recollection of his sojourn; but (say the older inhabitants) it will not compare with the illuminations of bygone summer nights, when as many as forty kilns would be burning together and island signalling to island with bonfires that flickered across the roadsteads and danced on the wild tide-races. From four to five hours the kilns would be kept burning, and the critical moment came when the mass of kelp began to liquefy, and the word was given to 'strike.' Then a dozen or fourteen men would leap down with pitchforks and heave the red molten mass from side to side of the kiln, toiling like madmen, while the sweat ran shining down their half-naked bodies; and sometimes—and always on Midsummer Eve, which is Baal-fire night—while they laboured, the women and girls would join hands and dance round the pit. In ten minutes or so all this excitement would die out, the dancers

would unlock their hands, the men climb out of the pit, and throw themselves panting on the sand, leaving the kelp to settle, cool, and vitrefy."

The kelp was ready to be exported as soon as it was cold; and the sooner the better, for it was apt to deteriorate with keeping. A single mass, formed in a kiln of the size above mentioned, would weigh from two and a half to three hundredweight. When the industry first began, the price obtained by the islanders was only eighteen to twenty shillings for every ton. This afterwards rose to forty-four shillings a ton; but for a long time the steward of the islands, who represented the Godolphins, insisted on acting the part of middleman, paying only twenty shillings, and threatening to turn any one out of his holding who sold it elsewhere for a higher price. Later, when the islanders had broken free from this tyranny, they were able to get from the merchants of Bristol and London as much as five pounds per ton of twenty-one hundredweight. But the amount of labour involved was colossal. It has been estimated that more than three tons of sea-


Jessie Macpherson

weed were required at a burning, in order to produce three hundredweight of kelp. This huge mass of weed had all of it to be cut from the rocks, carried, scattered, dried, and stacked, before it was ready for burning; and many times must the entire operation be repeated during the season.

Chief amongst summer resorts for the kelp-making families, were the Eastern Islands, where, as Woodley tells us, they would reside "during the whole of the kelping season;—not forgetting, however, with their characteristic attention to religious duties, to repair to the church of the nearest inhabited island on Sundays!"

Each island had its limits for gathering the ore-weed, and seldom a year passed but some offenders were brought before the Council and punished for encroaching on the territories of other islands. The distant ledges were free to all.

Great skill was required in burning, especially in knowing the exact moment when to "strike," and in keeping the sand from getting into the kiln and spoiling the kelp.

The smell of the burning weed was peculiarly offensive and very penetrating. Even in the height of summer doors and windows had to be barred to keep out the smoke, the odour of which would cling to clothes and furniture long after the kelping-season was over.

It was never an industry that paid well. In some years it brought into the islands as much as £500 to £700, but each family could seldom by much hard work earn more than £10 in a season. Still, that was better than nothing, and it was a great blow to the islanders when, owing to increased competition, they could no longer find a market for their kelp, especially since only a short time before effective measures had been taken to put a stop to smuggling.

In 1819 the distress was very great, and in order to alleviate it £13,000 was collected on the mainland for the purpose of starting a mackerel and pilchard fishery. Fish-cellars were built on Tresco, and boats and nets provided; but the success of the enterprise was only short-lived, owing to the want of capital to fall back upon.

At last, when matters were so bad that it seemed as if they could get no worse, a new means of earning a livelihood was discovered by some enterprising Scillonians. They found that by exporting to the shores of the Mediterranean their surplus produce (which consisted chiefly of potatoes), in ships of their own building, and bringing back cargoes of fruit to England they could get a good return for their outlay.

This discovery gave a great impetus to agriculture and to shipbuilding, and many a trim schooner was turned out from Scillonian shipyards. At that time there was a duty levied on all vessels of 60 tons and over, so the shipwrights strictly limited the tonnage of their vessels to fifty-nine and a fraction.

And now, while this industry was still young, a great change befell the islands. In 1831 the lease of the Duke of Leeds, who was then the representative of the Godolphin family, expired, and he declined to renew it. For a few years the islands remained in the hands of William IV., and some attempts were made during that time to improve their

condition. But what they really wanted was a thorough reorganisation. They had been too long under the management of stewards, who had been either unwilling or unable to make necessary changes, and who had on some occasions used their power for purposes of extortion. Moreover, there had been very little encouragement to the people to make improvements on their land, for short leases had been the rule.

The advent of a new Governor changed all this. In 1835 Mr. Augustus Smith, having taken up the lease from the Crown, arrived in Scilly to inspect his new property, and before long the islanders discovered what it was to have an energetic and far-seeing Governor resident amongst them, instead of an inapproachable and preoccupied absentee landlord.

At first his acts were considered arbitrary; the ne'er-do-weels were dispatched to the mainland; sons were not allowed to remain at home on the farm if there was not sufficient work for them; schools were opened, and education made compulsory long before it was so in England. The people covertly resented

what they considered to be the loss of their freedom, but the islands are still reaping the benefits of this autocratic rule.

Under it the shipbuilding grew into an important industry, and only declined with the introduction of steam.

In those days the services of pilots were still much in request. The "Road" was often full of merchantmen, who had put in for repairs or supplies, or to wait for orders; and since every harbour in Scilly has its reef of rocks at the entrance, and around the islands the sea hides many a sunken ledge, a pilot was always signalled for at the earliest opportunity. A busy trade also was done in supplying these vessels with food, and executing necessary repairs. During the Franco-German War (1870–71) the frequent presence of German vessels in the harbour brought quite a little fortune into Scillonian pockets.

An old lady of my acquaintance well recalls putting into Scilly in those days, on her way back from Australia. She remembers how the islanders boarded the vessel with supplies of vegetables, fowls, and eggs, and what fine and

handsome men they were; and she has never forgotten the taste of the eggs, with their fine flavour of oranges! An orange-ship had been wrecked off the islands a short time before, and the hens had evidently failed to hand over the salvage to the Receiver of Wreck.

With the advent of steam all these various employments have vanished; and the building, piloting, provisioning, and repairing of ships no longer form part of the daily routine of Scilly.

Instead there has arisen the flower industry, which was started about thirty years ago. Improved communication with the mainland gives to Scillonians a ready market for their flowers during the first quarter of the year, and the exporting of early potatoes follows close on the heels of the flower-season.

With these sources of revenue, and with relays of visitors who are beginning to appreciate the climate and the many charms of Scilly, the islands are now more prosperous than at any former time.

On the death of Mr. Augustus Smith in

1872 they passed into the hands of his nephew, Mr. T. A. Dorrien-Smith, who still carries on the traditions of his predecessor, and takes a keen interest in all that concerns the welfare of the people.

The Flower Industry



IV

THE FLOWER INDUSTRY

IT is barely thirty years since first the sweet flower-fields began to cover the islands; but it is possibly nearly a thousand years since the original bulbs were introduced.

There are several reasons why it is thought likely that Scilly owes her semi-wild narcissus to the Benedictine monks, who brought some with them, so it is supposed, from the South of France, and planted them on this alien soil to which they have taken so kindly.

For although several varieties of the polyanthus narcissus have been found growing wild, it is in or near the gardens and orchards that they have always been most plentiful. A narcissus similar to the "Scilly White" has grown round St. Michael's Mount from time immemorial; and it has been noticed that

elsewhere also they have seemed to spring up in the footsteps of the old monks.

The Scilly White bears a very close resemblance to the Chinese joss-flower, which is held as sacred; and it would be a strange coincidence if here in England we have cause to associate it with consecrated ground.

It was long before Scillonians discovered what a gold-mine lay hidden for them in these simple flowers. On the other hand, it may be that they found the gold-mine as soon as it existed, for it is only comparatively recently that flowers have become as remunerative and as popular as they are to-day.

The pioneers of the flower industry were Mr. William Trevellick of Rocky Hill and Mr. Mumford of Holy Vale, who sent two boxes of flowers, gathered from the gardens and orchards, to Covent Garden Market, and received for them a sum of money far exceeding their expectations.

From that time onward they began to grow flowers systematically for the market, and, encouraged by their success, others soon followed their example.

In 1883 the Governor made a special journey through Holland, Belgium, and the Channel Islands for the purpose of making observations on the flower industry. He saw that Scilly was well able to forestall the Continental supplies, and accordingly he made extensive purchases of bulbs, and has ever since been one of the largest growers.

At first only those kinds that were already well known in the islands were cultivated—Scilly Whites, Soleil d'Ors, Grand Monarques, Pheasant Eyes, and the Yellow Daffodil; but now many of the newest and most valuable varieties may be seen.

It is no sinecure to be a flower-farmer nowadays. The heaviest work is, of course, during the harvest; but transplanting the bulbs, clearing the ground, and trimming the shelters, keep the farmers very busy all the summer; and those who force bulbs in glass-houses have hard work to get everything done before winter sets in.

The bulbs increase very rapidly in the ground, and are now exported as well as blossoms. Some sorts need to be transplanted and divided every few years; but Scilly Whites

may be left in the same place for twenty years without, apparently, taking any harm.

The dead leaves of the bulbs are raked off in summer when they are dry and sere, and are used for fodder for the cattle instead of hay. They were originally used for litter, to supply the scarcity of straw; but it was noticed that the cattle ate their bedding with great gusto, and seemed to flourish on it, although the green growing leaves are poison to them. So now ricks of lily-leaves may be seen side by side with the hay-ricks.

Every one who has a yard of ground to spare grows flowers. The harvest sometimes begins as early as the middle of December, and is not over until June, but the real press of work is during February and March. Then every "steamer-morning," that is to say every other week-day, from six o'clock to half-past nine you may hear a continuous rattle and rumble of carts, barrows, and trucks, laden with wooden boxes of flowers, making their way to St. Mary's Quay. They come from all parts; from the large fields by Old Town, from the sheltered valleys "back of the

country," from the sunny slopes of Porth Hellick, from the little gardens on Garrison Hill. The off-islands also send their share; Tresco, St. Agnes, and St. Martin's in flat-bottomed barges towed by the steam-launch that brings their mails, while heavily-laden sailing-boats put in from Bryher, until one wonders how it is possible that all these contributions can ever be stowed away in the hold of the "Lyonnesse."

The children of St. Mary's have three weeks' or a month's holiday from school during the busy season, the boys for picking flowers, the girls for tying. Sometimes the girls will beg for leave to go into the fields for a change; but it is back-aching work, and wet work too, very often. The men and boys usually wear leggings to protect themselves from the long, dripping wet leaves.

As soon as they are picked the flowers are put in water in the glass-houses. The bunching and tying are chiefly done by the women and children, and is paid for at the rate of threepence for a hundred bunches. A quick worker can make fifteen to twenty shillings a

week. Some of them tie them in their own homes, and you may see cartloads and barrow-loads of flowers, in boxes or baskets, being delivered at the cottage-doors loose, and fetched again later on, neatly tied, twelve in a bunch, and ready for packing. The flower-houses on the day before the steamer leaves are a sight to behold; banks of daffodils and narcissi, wall-flowers and anemone fulgens, tier upon tier. Afterwards they are packed in shallow wooden boxes, each containing three, five, or six dozen bunches; and at busy times the lights of the houses burn far into the night, showing that packing for next day's steamer is still going on within. And the tap, tap of the hammer of the box-maker is constantly heard at all hours throughout the flower-season.

The weather is of course a very important factor in the success or failure of the flower crop. A wet summer may prevent the bulbs from ripening; a strong gale in early spring may ruin thousands of flowers. The salt spray in a storm is swept right across the islands, spotting and blackening the blossoms so that they are unfit for the market; and although,

at a little distance a field may look delightful, it may prove on examination to be worthless, full of damaged flowers. So it is easy to understand why the growers prefer to pick the buds half-blown than to run the risk of their destruction.

There is a great difference between year and year in the abundance of the harvest. In the season before last there was no great show of flowers, but picking began about the middle of December, and went on continuously for four or five months. Prices kept up particularly well, owing to late frosts in the Riviera, and Scillonians were well content. They were proud to boast of having supplied the Battle of Flowers at Nice when the French gardens were under snow, in spite of the heavy protective duty that has to be paid. Last season was quite a contrast. It was a record year for quantities, but the harvest began much later. The flowers came on with a rush in February, and all kinds seemed to be in bloom at the same time, and to bloom as they had never bloomed before. They were, in fact,

too plentiful. "There's a boolk o' flowers," as one man put it, "but they ain't fetching no such tremendous price." It was thought that the flood in Paris also helped to bring down the prices, for people were in no mood for buying flowers there, and the surplus supplies were shipped to England.

Every one in Scilly was kept hard at work from morning to night, and even so it was impossible to keep pace with the flowers. Usually, as I have said, they are picked in bud to save them from sudden storms, and put in water in the glass-houses, where they will open under better protection and more quickly than out of doors. But this month of March they opened faster than they could be picked. It was a race between the animal kingdom and the vegetable; and the vegetable won! Wallflowers also were coming on apace, and had to be neglected until the masses of daffodils and narcissi had been attended to.

This exceptional crop was attributed to the warm, dry summer of the year before, which had ripened the bulbs to perfection, and made the fields thus bring forth "an hundredfold."

Bad weather kept back or spoilt the earlier flowers, and so complicated matters by concentrating the bulk of the work for the season more than ever into two short months.

Three times a week at the height of the harvest, fifty tons of flowers were leaving St. Mary's Quay for Penzance, en route for London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and other of our large cities. Fifty tons! That means, roughly speaking, three and a half million blossoms; and so we may reckon that at least one and a half million of flowers were being picked in Scilly every day!

And yet the islands did not look despoiled. Far from it. The fields were a glorious sight, sheets and waves of silver and gold, representing to their owners the silver and gold of hard cash.

But such a wealth and abundance of flowers is of less advantage to the grower than to the purchaser. So many tons poured into the market in the course of a single week bring down prices with a run. "More than double the usual crop and less than half the usual price," is not a satisfactory state of affairs, for

there are all the expenses of picking, tying, and carriage to be considered; and the cost of sending to London is no trifle, something like £6 a ton. An additional charge is the 10s. per ton which is paid to the Governor on all flowers that leave the islands, to recoup him for the lengthening of the pier twenty years ago. Prices were so reduced that Soleil d'Ors (I know it is bad French, but it would be the height of pedantry in Scilly to call them Soleils d'Or!) would only fetch 2s. for 36 bunches, when the year before they had been 5s. 6d., and Princeps had fallen to the same price from 4s. 6d.

But what a year it was for seeing the fields! I must say it again even if you are tired of hearing it. You must not imagine squares of flowers, flat as pancakes, prim and orderly and uninviting such as you see in Holland. In Scilly no two fields are alike, and it is difficult to find one that is flat and uninteresting. They cover the slopes facing to the west and south; very often they run down almost to the edge of the sea, with only a low stone hedge to divide them from the shore. What would



Wordsworth have felt, I wonder, to see these waves of dancing daffodils? Perhaps he would have preferred the scattered groups and clusters that spring up of themselves in the hedges by the wayside, or even on the beach itself.

For the wise Scillonian soon discovers which of his bulbs are the best and most profitable; and, weeding out from his fields those that promise least, he "heaves them to cliff," where, if they light on any sort of soil, and out of reach of the waves, they will blossom even at the water's edge, till some unusually high tide washes them away. In the meantime they delight the eye of the passer-by with unexpected splashes of gold, drops from the gorgeous seas that cover the island-flanks.

So lovely are the flowers that one would like to imagine the industry as "roses, roses all the way"; but of course that cannot be the case. Besides the drawbacks I have mentioned already—damage to crops from sudden storms, and gluts in the market from excess of supply—there are other risks to run. It has happened that in rough or foggy weather the off-islanders have sent quantities of flowers

to St. Mary's by the launch, and they have been duly stowed away in the hold of the "Lyonnesse." The weather has got worse and worse, and it has been considered unsafe to make the journey to Penzance. But the flower-boxes are in the hold, and there they have to stay; and eventually they reach their destination on the mainland. By that time their contents are dead and worthless, and so the grower has lost his flowers, his time, and his trouble, and yet he must pay the carriage, and for the return of the empty boxes if he wants them.

To any one who has paid a visit to Scilly during the flower-season, the always-welcome sight in the London streets of the first daffodils of the season will be more than ever welcome; for these children of the spring will recall the blue seas and sunny skies of the flower-islands where they were reared.

Descriptive and Archæo-logical

V

DESCRIPTIVE AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL

HOW many islands are there? That is a difficult question to answer until we know how big a rock must be in order to be dignified with the name of island. One writer tells us there are over 300, another says nearly 200, a third has counted 140 on which grass will grow, and a fourth makes his estimate (how, I know not) as low as 17. Three hundred must include a great many "blynd rokkettes," as the old chronicler Leland delightfully calls the little barren rocks.

One point at least is certain, that nowadays there are only five islands which are inhabited: St. Mary's, Tresco, Bryher, St. Agnes, and St. Martin. Sixty years ago there were six, but Samson has since been vacated.

There is reason to suppose that some of

the islands were formerly joined together, and that they have been separated by the encroachment of the sea. Even now at low water of a spring-tide it is possible to walk from Samson to Bryher, from Bryher to Tresco, and from Tresco to St. Martin's, across the sand-flats, if one does not mind the risk of getting wet; and to wade across Crow Bar between St. Martin's and St. Mary's. Ruins of houses and stone walls have been found six feet under the sand, the walls descending from the hills of Bryher and Samson, and running many feet under the level of the sea towards Tresco; and it is said that there was once a causeway from the abbey church at Tresco across the downs to the church on St. Helen's Isle.

There is a tradition that long ago the islands were all connected with the mainland, and that they are the only remnant of a tract of land called Lyonnesse, which contained 140 churches, but over which the Atlantic now rolls. On the spot where now the water swirls round the dangerous "Seven Stones," there is said to have stood a city called the City of Lions, and that region is even to-day known to

fishermen as Tregva—the "town" or "dwelling."

The story goes that when King Arthur, of glorious renown, had fought his last fight and lay dead on the field of battle, his followers fled in confusion, pursued by Mordred, the rebel knight; and the course they took brought them to the extreme west of Cornwall.

> "Back to the sunset-bound of Lyonnesse—
> A land of old upheaven from the abyss
> By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
> Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
> And the long mountains ended in a coast
> Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
> The phantom circle of a moaning sea."

Pursuers and pursued were still pressing on when suddenly there arose a mighty tempest. The earth rocked, heaved, and was rent; and in between the two bands of warriors burst an angry flood of surging waters, swallowing up Mordred and his men before they had time to escape. But Arthur's followers were marvellously preserved; the sea did not overtake them. Like the Israelites of old, they saw the destruction of their enemies while they

themselves stood in safety on dry ground. And that ground was Scilly, all that is left of the lost land of Lyonnesse, over which the sea still swirls and eddies with unabating violence.

In the names of two of the eastern islands of Scilly, Great and Little Arthur, are found a reminiscence of the followers of the "Flower of Kings," who are said to have lived and died on the islands where they had been so strangely (and mercifully) cut off from the rest of their kind.

So runs the legend, which sober, unromantic people spend their efforts and waste their breath in trying to disprove. They prefer to think that the sea between Scilly and Cornwall is called in Cornish Lethowsow (*i.e.*, lioness) on account of its violence and turbulence, and that King Arthur's followers escaped by boat—or not at all!

There is a tradition of the house of Trevilian that one of their ancestors had great possessions in Lyonnesse, and saved himself at the time of the inundation by swimming to shore on a white horse; in memory whereof the crest of the family is still a white horse.

Whether or not these stories have a foundation of truth, no one can say; but there is certainly a general resemblance in character and formation between Scilly and the Land's End.

The whole of the islands are composed of granite, which is seen cropping up everywhere through the soil. Huge blocks and boulders of it lie scattered all along the coast, many of them of weird and fantastic shapes. The strangest have been given special names, more or less appropriate. On the peninsula of Peninnis, St. Mary's Island, there is the "Tooth," a slender conical rock 30 feet high; also the "Pulpit," with its flat sounding-board, a fine specimen of horizontal decomposition.

Then there is the remarkable "Giant's Punch-bowl" on St Agnes, consisting of two large masses of rock—the "Bowl" itself, and the base on which it stands. The base is over 10 feet high, the Bowl more than 8 feet, and the entire height of the top of the Bowl from the ground is nearly 20 feet. The Giant could have indulged in a hogshead of punch at a time, for that is the capacity of the natural basin. In former days the Bowl was a

"logan-stone," and could easily be rocked by two or three men with a pole, but now it rests on its base at two points.

Another strangely-shaped rock on St. Agnes is known as the "Nag's Head"; but there certainly never was on sea or land a *horse* with a head of that shape, whatever other strange beast it may resemble. It is thought to have been worshipped in ancient times, for there is a circle of stones round it.

It is not a hard rock, this island granite, and is easily worn away by the action of wind and water. At many points the sea has eaten out large caves in the cliffs, and bellows in them, with the sound of thunder, in rough weather.

The wildness and grandeur of the coast scenery forms a great contrast to the peaceful flower-farms lying but a short distance away. The flowers are sheltered from the boisterous winds where necessary by high hedges of euonymus, veronica, and escallonia. Evergreen shrubs are naturally chosen, for at the time when they are most needed no others are in leaf. The escallonia and veronica grow with great luxuriance, and send forth a glow of



bright pink bells and purple spikes against the dark background of their glossy leaves. Of trees the islands can make but little boast; they are too much exposed to the violence of storms. The only really large trees are at Holy Vale and Newford on St. Mary's, and there are no others of any size, except in the gardens.

Dracæna palms flourish particularly well, and when one sees a group of them against the deep blue of the sea it is difficult to believe that one is still in the British Isles, and not on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Duke Cosmo III. of Tuscany says that the only trees he saw growing in 1669 were apple- and cherry-trees, planted by the then Governor, but that thick stumps of oak were found in many places in digging the ground. So it seems that the islands were once better wooded than they are now. The tradition of an Abbey Wood on Tresco confirms this supposition.

Apple and other fruit-trees are often seen growing in the midst of the flower-fields; or, to put it the other way round, the orchards are often thick with daffodils.

Geraniums and fuchsias reach a great height, climbing to the eaves of the houses, and sometimes blossoming all the year round. It is said that an islander once replied with indignation to a stranger's tactless comment on the scarcity of wood. "Indeed, *we* can heat our ovens with our geranium-faggots!" Any one who knows the Scillonians and their sense of humour would guess there was a twinkle in his eye as he said it.

Marguerite-daisies also grow into large woody shrubs, in perpetual bloom, and are often seen bordering the fields of daffodils.

In his *Observations on the Ancient and Present State of the Isles of Scilly*, published in 1756, Dr. Borlase strongly recommends the planting of "shelters of Elder, Dutch elm, Sycamore, and the like, in clumps and hedge-rows," for he notices that everything which rises not above the hedges does very well; "but to tell you the truth," he continues, "the true spirit of planting either has never reached here, or has been forced to give way to more necessary calls."

It may be that the fine trees at Holy Vale

owe their origin to this advice, and certainly it has been followed so far as the hedges are concerned.

The highest hill in the islands is little more than 160 feet above the sea-level; but when, as in the case of St Martin's Head, the hill rises to this height straight from the sea instead of by gradual degrees, there is no lack of grandeur and impressiveness, especially from the seaward side.

Scilly has not a single river; and no wonder, for where would there be room? But neither does it abound in brooks and rivulets. I can only recall one tiny stream. The islanders depend for their water on wells, and on the rainfall, and only in very exceptional seasons do they run short. There are fresh-water ponds on St. Mary's, Tresco, Bryher, and St. Agnes, but most of them are near enough to the sea to have been spoiled occasionally in times past by the entrance of the waves and spray during storms. Last summer (1909) the ponds on Bryher and St. Agnes dried up for the first time within the memory of man.

The inhabitants of St. Mary's are wont to

say that though they have no rivers they have two bridges! One of these spans the fosse of Star Castle, and the other is thrown across a corner of the beach to make a short cut to the life-boat house.

In spite of the scarcity of trees and the absence of streams and rivers, I cannot agree with Parson Troutbeck who writes: "Here, upon the whole, the poet would have a bad time of it, and might sigh alike for the purling stream and the shady grove." I fear I should feel but scant respect for any poet who found cause for sighs and regrets in Scilly.

And this is a paradise without even a serpent, for the islands are as destitute of snakes and vipers as is the blessed isle of Saint Patrick. Hence arose an old saying that when the Almighty had finished creating Ireland there were a few handfuls of mud (*sic!*) left, which, being cast into the sea, became the Scilly Isles. I think this saying must have originated with an Irishman,—and that is the only excuse I can find for it!

Rats there are, whose ancestors are said to have all arrived in a ship from Shields. And

in Troutbeck's time there were cockroaches—such cockroaches! His very description of them makes one shudder! "A large sort of flies, sometimes several inches long, but not so large here as in some other places; esteemed great curiosities and scarce known in any other part of the world."

Fortunately these curiosities seem not to be so much in evidence now.

The Scillonians are a mixed race. They are thought to be descended partly from the ancient Iberians, that small and swarthy people, of whom so little is known and so much conjectured. No doubt they have also much Celtic blood in their veins, but they have never had any distinctive language, like others of the "Celtic fringe," and the English that they speak is remarkably pure. Their descent has likewise been traced from the Scandinavians who once frequented the islands; and doubtless other strains as well have mingled with their blood.

There is a tradition that a ship of the Armada was wrecked off the coast of St. Agnes (at how many points of the British coast is there such a tradition!), and it is said

that some of the Spaniards who escaped with their lives made that little island their home. According to the old chronicler Leland, St. Agnes was entirely depopulated somewhere about the beginning of the sixteenth century, the five families who lived there being all drowned on their way back from a marriage feast at St. Mary's; so it is possible that if the Spaniards landed here they found a free field.

The present inhabitants of St. Agnes are a fine race, but quite distinct in character from the rest of the islanders; and I have heard it said that when they get excited or angry, "You can see the old Moor coming out as plainly as anything."

St. Martin's men are tall and fair and handsome, and seem to show signs of Scandinavian descent.

That a purer English is spoken on the islands than on the mainland has been explained by the fact that a Bedfordshire company of soldiers was left behind in garrison here during the Commonwealth, and in time was completely forgotten. The soldiers intermarried with the island-women when they had given up all idea

of being recalled. I do not think that any one who has ever heard the true Bedfordshire twang could credit this story as an explanation!

But there is little doubt that fresh blood has been introduced into the islands by such intermarriages. Duke Cosmo III. of Tuscany was driven by contrary winds to put into St. Mary's Harbour in 1669, and he reports that "Corn of late began to be scarce, in consequence of the increase of the population produced by marriages of the soldiers of the garrison with the islanders, but this has been remedied for some years past by forbidding them to marry!"

The isolation of the islanders led in past times to intermarriage between the same families again and again, but the results do not appear to have been as unfortunate as might have been expected.

There is this result, on the off-islands especially, that the same surname is repeated over and over again, so that nicknames have to be resorted to, to distinguish one man from another. On St. Agnes every man is a Hicks, unless he is a Legge. On Tresco, Bryher, and St. Martin's,

Jenkins, Pender, Ashford, and Ellis are the typical names.

It happened once on St. Agnes at the signing of the parish-books that the names of the four signatories (the churchwarden, the two overseers and the auditor from London) were all the same—Hicks!

There are traces of prehistoric man in nearly all the islands; "kitchen-middens" with heaps of limpet-shells and other refuse, and great numbers of sepulchral barrows of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.

At the foot of Hellingy Downs on St. Mary's the remains of a primitive village have been discovered, with the foundations of many circular huts, some of which have now been washed away by the sea. There was a kitchen-midden close by; and an ancient stone hand-mill, about four thousand years old, and some very crude pottery of the same period, were unearthed from among the foundations.

When digging near Garrison Hill, St. Mary's, some of the islanders have come across layers of limpet-shells four feet in depth; and on the desolate island of Annet, now sacred to sea-birds,

there has recently been found a midden with quantities of the peculiarly shaped and unmistakable pharyngeal bone of the wrasse, as well as the inevitable limpet-shells, showing that in this case prehistoric man had endeavoured to vary his diet. Dr. Borlase, the antiquarian, thus describes the barrows :—

"The outer ring is composed of large stones pitched on end, and the heap within consists of smaller stones, clay, and earth, mixed together. They have generally a cavity of stonework in the middle, covered with flat stones; but the barrows are of various dimensions, and the cavities, which, being low and covered with rubble are scarce apparent in some, consist of such large materials in others that they make the principal figure in the monument."

These funeral mounds were formerly called "Giants' Graves," and it was believed that terrific storms would follow their disturbance. Dr. Borlase got into some trouble with the people because his investigations were followed by a storm which ruined their crops. And yet, unfortunately, many of the stones have been removed by the inhabitants from time to time

for building purposes. The present pier on St. Mary's is said to be partly built with stones from these old sepulchres.

Dr. Borlase found "no bones, or urns, but some strong unctuous earth which smelt cadaverous." Other searchers have been more fortunate. On the Gugh of St. Agnes barrows have since been opened, containing coarse earthen pots with cinders and ashes inside, sepulchres no doubt of the Bronze Age when cremation was the usual practice. In recent times Mr. Bonsor opened another, of very great interest, on the same peninsula. Inside were urns and skeletons in layers, one above the other, the same grave having been used apparently by two different peoples, those who cremated their dead and those who followed the later custom of inhumation. The later generations seem often to have turned out the earlier.

One of the most perfect kistvaens or cists in Cornwall was found by Mr. Augustus Smith in a tumulus on the northern hill of Samson in 1862. It contained the lower and upper jaw of a man, and the remains of human teeth,



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all of which had been subjected to the action of fire.

On the top of the hill above the Clapper Rocks, on the east coast of St. Mary's, is a barrow which was opened by Mr. Bonsor in 1903, and in his opinion it is the finest specimen in the West of England. Altogether in Scilly there must be nearly a hundred examples, and no doubt many have been destroyed. The built graves lined with stones are thought to be of earlier date than those formed of only one large block. Very often there is a double circle of stones round the mound, an inner and an outer, the covering slabs being in some cases eight or nine feet long.

On the summit of nearly every hill these desolate green barrows are to be seen, reminding us of that far mightier barrow, the "great and shapely mound" to Achilles, "raised on the high headland, so that it might be seen from afar by future generations of men."

For long the islands have been identified with the Cassiterides, or tin-producing islands mentioned by ancient writers. But there does

not seem to be sufficient evidence to prove this indisputably, and experts are not satisfied that tin was ever worked in Scilly. Not only so, but they go farther, and prophesy that it never will be; in fact, to parody the Spanish proverb, that it would require a gold-mine to work a tin-mine in the islands!

There has been much heated controversy on this subject of late; but then there were warm discussions concerning the tin-trade as far back as the second century B.C., so what can be expected nowadays? When there are many different opinions, put forward by as many different writers, all learned and all firmly convinced that the "other fellow's a fool," what course is left for the unlearned multitude, after hearing all that has to be said, but to retain an "open mind" on the subject? To prove my open-mindedness, I will not omit to quote the story about the Cassiterides which has usually been taken to refer to the Islands of Scilly.

Strabo, who lived at the end of B.C. and the beginning of A.D., tells us that the inhabitants of the Cassiterides obtained from their mines

tin and lead, which they used to barter for earthen vessels, salt, and instruments of brass; that the Phœnicians found commerce with them so lucrative that they kept it a secret from all the world, but the Romans sent vessels to follow a trader on his voyage. To deceive them, he ran his ships ashore elsewhere, and the whole crew nearly perished. For this public-spirited act he was rewarded from the common treasury, besides receiving the value of his lost ship and cargo.

But, according to Strabo, the Romans found out the trade at last. Publius Crassus (whoever he may have been) sailed across to the islands, ascertained that tin was near the surface, and indicated the route for the benefit of traders, "although the passage was longer than that to Britain."

If we do not admit the identity of Scilly with the Cassiterides, we have no proof that the Romans had dealings with the islands before their occupation of Britain.

The origin of the name "Scilly" is wrapped about with mystery. Not that there is any lack of suggestions; on the contrary, there is such a

plethora of them that one feels no "forrader" after having heard them all.

One learned writer says with confidence, "The islands take their name from the old Silurian inhabitants to whom they served as a last refuge." Other ideas are that the name is derived from "Sulleh," a British word meaning "rocks consecrated to the sun"; or from a Cornish word signifying "divided."

The inhabitants themselves seem to favour most the notion that the conger-eels, locally called "selli," have given their name to the islands.

There are other suggestions; but as to which of the many is the most probable we must leave antiquarians and topographers to fight it out between them, and when they are all agreed we may conclude we have arrived at a certainty of the truth; and that is, perhaps, only another way of saying that we shall never know!

Most of the names of places in Scilly are Cornish, but the principal islands were named after the Saints to whom their churches were dedicated. Tresco was at one time called St.

Nicholas, from the Benedictine Abbey which used to be there. The harbours of Old and New Grimsby on Tresco may, like their namesake in England, owe their name to the visits of the Northmen who were here in the tenth century.

The most common Cornish words found in the place-names of Scilly are:—

Bre, a hill, as in Bryher, formerly called Brefar.

Carn, a pile of rocks, as in Carn Friars, Carn Near, &c.

Creeb or Creb, a crest, as in Crebawethan, the Creeb Rocks, &c.

Innis, an island, as in Peninnis, Innisidgen, Iniscaw.

Men or Min, a rock, as in Menawethen, Menavawr, Mincarlo, &c.

Pen, a head, as in Peninnis.

Porth or Per, a bay, as in Porth Cressa, Permellin, Perconger, &c.

Scaw, an alder, as in Tresco, Iniscaw.

Tre, a homestead, as in Tresco, Trenemen.

Vear, great, as in Rosevear, Holvear.

Vean, little, as in Rosevean, Cove Vean.

Unfortunately, the islands have no coat-of-arms; but if they had, it ought to be all "or" and "azure"; for those are the "tinctures" that seem to represent them best. An azure sea lying under an azure sky; golden gorse and golden daffodils; rocks turned to gold in the sunlight, bordered with golden sand, or covered with golden lichen. Even the fishermen and farmers put on azure! especially those on St. Agnes, whose blue linen blouses are quite distinctive of the island.

The Island-Folk; their Ways and Customs

VI

THE ISLAND-FOLK; THEIR WAYS AND CUSTOMS

HERE in Scilly, where so many of the place-names are Celtic and there is certainly some Celtic blood, one would expect to find abundant traces of folk-lore and superstition. But these are very few, and any that remain are fast dying out.

The people have been educated out of any old fancies they may have had, for education, as is well known, has a way of killing imagination. If it would but kill only the hurtful superstitions, and leave the wayward play of fancy, and the poetical way of looking at things!

It used to be said that once the fairies danced on Buzza Hill; but if so they must have fled when the windmill was built, for they have

never been heard of since. And this is the only vestige of a fairy-tale that clings about the islands.

Just a few old fancies linger amongst the older folk. Thus, a cat lying in front of the fire with its tail turned to the north is said to be a sure sign of a gale of wind.

And there are weatherwise proverbs among the fishermen, such as

> "Southerly wind and fog;
> Easterly wind, all snug,"

and "You may look for six weeks of weather in March," is a hit at the variable character of that month.

A few of the ancient customs also linger. Up to the last century the old feast known as Nikla Thies was still celebrated when the last load of grain was brought in, and they "used to dance and polka till all was blue, to the tune of 'Buffalo Girls.'" But now hardly any grain is grown in the islands.

At Christmas there used to be the "goose-dancing" (*i.e.*, "guise-dancing") in masquerade, when "the maidens dressed up for young men,



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and the young men for maidens, and danced about the streets." This custom is still kept up in a modified form.

Midsummer night was celebrated by the lighting of bonfires and the letting off of crackers. When the shipbuilding was in full swing there was abundance of material for amusement in this direction. Tar-barrels would be set afire and rolled blazing along the streets, and lighted torches swung round on chains, high above the heads of those who carried them.

The custom of going limpeting on Good Friday still exists, but more for the sake of the fun of securing the limpet before he glues himself tight, than for the sake of eating him when cooked, as no amount of boiling could make him palatable.

"Tough and elastic, like a piece of india-rubber, and if you don't mind, when you're trying to bite it, it will fly back in your face and give you a black eye." So limpet-eating was described to me by one who *had* tried.

The crowning of the May Queen, which takes place every May Day, is a very old

custom in Scilly. The May-pole is now set up in the "Park" of Hugh Town, and the children dance round it dressed in white and garlanded with flowers.

There are still people who seem to think that the Scillies are almost desert islands, where it is not easy to obtain good food and lodging. But this is very far from the truth, for in Hugh Town there are two comfortable hotels—Tregarthen's, with its garden of tropical plants, at the foot of Garrison Hill; and Holgate's, overlooking St. Mary's Pool, at the other end of the town. There are besides a number of good boarding-houses, and "apartments to let," and one can also stay at some of the flower-farms.

G. H. Lewes writes amusingly of his experiences in the matter of food in 1857:—

"Beef *is* obtainable, by forethought and stratagem, but mutton is a myth. Poultry, too, may be had—at Penzance; and fish—when the weather is calm, which it never is at this season. But market there is none.

"Twice a week a vegetable-cart from 'the country' (which means a mile and a half

distance) slowly traverses the town, and if you like to gather round it, as the cats and dogs do round the London cat's-meat man, you may stock yourself with vegetables for three days."

His landlady appeared to think him most unreasonable because he objected to doing without meat for an entire day.

"Spiritually-minded persons, indifferent to mutton, may disregard this carnal inconvenience, and take refuge in the more ideal elements of picturesqueness, solitude, and simplicity; and I cannot say that the inconvenience weighed heavily in the scale against the charms of Scilly —the more so as an enlarged experience proved the case not to be quite so bad as it seemed at first."

Nowadays things are very different; but still if you decide to board yourself, "forethought" if not "stratagem" is required for obtaining meat, which in part comes from Penzance, and is exhibited for sale on the ground-floor of the Town Hall,—the only "butcher's shop." Once in the fishing-season I followed a group of Lowestoft fishermen all the way down the street, and could tell from their talk that they

were in search of the butcher's. "Not one in the whole blessed place!" I heard them say in astonishment, which was not lessened when they were presently directed to the Town Hall.

In Woodley's time the "gentry" used to bespeak the different portions of an animal before it was killed, so that the farmer was insured against risk; just as nowadays in Egypt the would-be purchaser of camel-flesh will chalk out in white his private mark, on neck or thigh or shoulder, of the living beast, to show which is the joint he desires to have when it has become meat.

Fresh fish is to be had when there has been a good catch, and is hawked round in sixpenny strings. Milk and new-laid eggs seem to be obtainable to any extent. Cornish cream, alas! with the advent of the separator, is threatening to disappear.

I must not forget to mention one article of food which shows decided originality—a twopenny loaf of bread, one half of which is brown and other half white!

In the old days the people lived almost

entirely on scads (*i.e.*, horse-mackerel), dried and salted, and potatoes; and this gave rise to the couplet

> "Scads and taties all the week
> And conger-pie on Sundays."

There is a story that a pilot was once asked "What is the population of Scilly?" Now this was before the days of compulsory education, and he had not the faintest idea what "population" meant; but he was not going to confess ignorance to a stranger, so he made a random shot at the meaning, and replied, "Scads and tates, sir!"

To this day there are islanders who say they would not exchange a good conger-pie for a round of beef, and who regret that scads are no longer caught. They are rich, oily fish, and used to be caught in great quantities in the Cove of St. Agnes, which was hauled in turn by the inhabitants of St. Mary's, St. Agnes, aud Bryher, while the men of St. Martin's and Tresco would spread their seines out amongst the eastern islands. Ling and conger were

also caught, and dried on the stone hedges, or salted for winter use.

When smuggling was rife in the islands, intemperance was common; but nowadays things are changed for the better. This is in spite of the fact that no licences are required for selling beer and spirits. Anybody who likes may keep an inn, with the permission of the Governor. The same rule applies to the keeping of dogs, carriages, and men-servants; the selling of tobacco; and the carrying of a gun: licence duties do not exist.

No notes on Scilly would be complete if they failed to take account of the character of the people, for their kindness, courtesy, and ready good-humour add much to the attraction of the islands. Tribute has been paid to them by many an old writer, and so far as I can learn, by report and by experience, everything that has been said in their praise is true to this day.

"I doubt not," writes Heath, "but every stranger that visits the islands will see honour, justice, and every social virtue exercised among the inhabitants . . . though there is never a

lawyer and but one clergyman in all the islands."

Troutbeck quotes this sentence fifty years later (but without a word of acknowledgment, as is his way), merely changing "one" clergyman to "two," to suit the altered times. He says elsewhere, "The present islanders are commonly civil to strangers." It would be quite as true to say they are *un*commonly civil!

Doctor Borlase in 1752 speaks of "the civility natural to these islanders," and Woodley tells the same story.

Then there is the testimony of G. H. Lewes in 1857: "Not an approach to rudeness or coarseness have I seen anywhere."

Woodley most unreasonably accuses them of curiosity, but what respect should we have for the members of any small community who did not take a friendly interest in each other's concerns? I am quite sure that by the time Woodley had finished collecting material for his book of 338 pages he must himself have acquired a terrible character for asking questions!

The desire for local bits of news must have

been very much fostered in the islands by the difficulty there used to be in obtaining any from the outside world. It is said that Queen Elizabeth had ascended the throne for several months before the news of the death of Queen Mary arrived in Scilly! Nowadays the telegraph keeps them well in touch with everything that is going on, and acquaints them with the state of the markets for their produce.

I think the most prominent trait in the Scillonian character is a cheerful kindliness of disposition, which makes the visitor feel on his first arrival he is welcome, and soon makes him feel quite at home. This kindliness is shown in many little ways, even when there would be much excuse for contrary behaviour. A visitor and his wife were once trying to scale a stone hedge—with no evil intent, but all the same it was trespassing. An islander who was working in the field, instead of stopping them, offered to take off the top stones of the wall, "to make it easier for the lady," and to replace them when they were safely over. That is true Scillonian courtesy!

I have seen a tourist rush with his camera

through a field of daffodils, crying to the owner and his men, "Please keep on picking and take no notice of me!" And they have done it, when anywhere else he would have been requested, either politely or forcibly, to keep to the footpath.

Another characteristic is the delightful Celtic leisureliness. One kindly housewife only voiced the general feeling when she said, "Where's the need of hurry? What is not done to-day will be done to-morrow." We had sought shelter in her cottage from the torrents of rain and were terribly interrupting her spring-cleaning; yet she not only insisted on drying our clothes, but came and entertained us in her best parlour with stories of the wrecks, and soothed our scruples with the words I have quoted.

An American girl-visitor once noticed this trait: "You haven't learnt to hustle here," said she to her boatman. "If the islands belonged to *us* we'd soon make things spin."

"Could you hustle the tide in and out?" was the quietly-humorous retort. "Or could you hustle the fish into the nets, and the lobsters

into the pots?" And what a blessing it is that Nature cannot be hustled, but will take her own time over her own work, however much money-grubbing man may try to hurry her up: it is but little he can do, with all his forcing-houses and schemes for premature development!

Scillonians have no lack of humour—that saving sense of humour which helps one over the roughnesses of life, little and big, and turns each tumble on life's journey into an occasion for a smile at one's own expense.

There are no "yokels" or "boors" in Scilly, such as one meets in parts of rural England, who are rude or tongue-tied if one asks them a simple question. They have a delightful way here of saying "Please?" with a special intonation, if you say something to them which they do not quite hear or understand. It sounds very pretty from the little children.

The children, on the whole, are quite charming and very friendly without being rude or troublesome. They used to crowd round sometimes when I was painting, but they never got in the way.



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CALIFOR

Occasionally they would plant themselves in the middle distance under the impression that my eye was like a photographic lens, and that so long as they came within the field of vision they must infallibly appear in the picture!

In the spring they make chains and garlands of daffodils and narcissi, with which they deck themselves; for to them these are the commonest of common flowers, and on a par with buttercups and daisies.

Honesty may almost be taken for granted in the islands. Heath's statement is still true: "There are no robbers, housebreakers, or highwaymen." For there is no real poverty, and no one who has not got a character to lose. Once when visiting St. Agnes we were advised to leave our luggage by a lonely road-side while we went round to look for rooms. "We are all honest people on St. Agnes," they told us, "so it will be quite safe." And so it was.

They have been accused by one or two writers of being grasping and exorbitant in their charges, and altogether too fond of money; but I can only say that I have never seen the slightest sign of this, and I have had strong

evidence to the contrary. But I have been told that if you rub them up very much the wrong way they will take it out of you by raising their charges.

"Neatness of dress," says Woodley, "particularly on the Sabbath day, is in many instances carried to an extreme, especially amongst the younger females." And he describes how those who on one day have been scrambling, shoeless and stockingless, over the rocks, gathering and drying ore-weed for kelp, may be seen on the next day dressed in white, with straw hats and flying ribbons. I have always thought that neatness of dress had no extreme, but represented the Aristotelian mean between slovenliness and excess of finery! So in my eyes this statement is one of unmixed praise. A local wag once made a hit at this excessive love of "neatness" by parodying the lines I have quoted above. He chalked up on the pier:—

> "Scads and taties all the week
> And *a green veil* on Sundays."

The days of scads and tates and scrambling

for seaweed have now been long past; but prosperity does not seem to have spoilt the islanders any more than adversity. They keep their simplicity, and kindliness, and freedom from vulgar display.

There is a delightful spirit of toleration in the little islands amongst the members of the different religious denominations. Those represented are Church of England, Wesleyan, and Bible Christian, with a sprinkling of Plymouth Brethren. But all those who profess and call themselves Christians seem to have learnt better than their fellows on the mainland the art of sinking their religious differences.

A simple and kindly soul, whose acquaintance I made, gave homely expression to the feeling which seems to be general; and I will repeat the words as nearly as possible as I heard them:—

"This is the way I looks at it. Heaven is like that Castle on the hill; there's a many ways of getting there, and no two of us will ever go quite the same way. Why, to begin with, we don't start from the same point.

"But this much I do know, you won't get

there any sooner by throwing brick-bats at your neighbour who's coming along another road; and if you begin to do that, you may be pretty certain you're off the track yourself.

"If only we'd all take hold on Christ and follow close to Him, we shouldn't go far wrong then; and we'd be so busy loving our neighbour we'd quite forget he didn't think just the same as us.

"I'm a Church-body myself; I was born a Church-body, and I mean to remain one till I die; but I don't see that's any reason for thinking hard things of the chapel-folk just because they likes to go to Heaven another way."

A crude confession of faith, do I hear you say? But you will admit that through it breathes a spirit of love and kindliness. And more—that it embodies, in homely words, a great spiritual truth; for is it not only by many different ways, and yet by the one Way, that we can all arrive at our goal?

The islands were for many years, as we have seen, under the abbots of Tavistock, who

held spiritual jurisdiction under the bishops of Exeter. But not a single bishop ever set foot on them until 1831!

In a letter written by John Grandison, Bishop of Exeter, to the Pope, in the reign of Edward III., he says that no bishops in person ever visited these islands, but were wont to depute friars for that purpose.

Bishop Philpotts of Exeter came in 1831; and again in 1838 to consecrate the new church on St. Mary's. The islands since then have come under the diocese of Truro.

Troutbeck, writing of St. Mary's in 1794, says: "The clergyman who officiates has neither institution nor induction to this benefice, nor visitation nor a licence from the Bishop of Exeter, but holds his preferment at the will of his patron, the Lord-proprietor. Formerly he was the only clergyman upon the islands; and children were brought from the off-islands to be baptized, often at the risk of their lives; but as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has sent an assistant minister who resides at Tresco, and visits all the off-islands occasionally in fine weather, the inhabitants

are not only benefited by his instructions and exemplary conversation, but freed from the inconveniences under which they formerly laboured."

The other off-island churches were only supplied by native fishermen, who were appointed by the agent to read prayers and sermons agreeable to the doctrines of the Church of England.

Bryher is now the only inhabited island on which there is no resident clergyman; but a service is held every Sunday afternoon, and one evening during the week by the clergyman from Tresco. On Sunday mornings and evenings there is a service in the chapel, conducted by one of the fishermen-farmers, at which, I was told, Spurgeon's sermons are read. "We've been having them forty years, and we aren't tired of them yet."

I inquired whether the attendance was greater at the church or at the chapel.

"Well, you see, it's like this: the people as goes to church is the people as goes to chapel; and the people as don't go to both don't go anywhere at all. Church and chapel aren't

ever open at the same time, so there's no rivalry."

We once told a little girl on St Agnes we were going to see the church. "Oh, but you must go and see the chapel too," said she. I fear she would think it mere blind prejudice on my part that I have included views of two churches in this series, and not a single chapel!

Woodley writes that in his day the people would repair to the meeting-house in the morning, to church in the forenoon and afternoon, and again to the meeting in the evening.

Tresco is the only inhabited island on which there is no chapel. For many years the chapel-meetings were held every Sunday afternoon in the Church-room, with the approval of the Bishop of Truro, as well as of Mr. Augustus Smith, the Governor, who gave his consent willingly on condition that those who attended should be regular at Church in the morning and evening. The Plymouth Brethren now meet there in each other's cottages.

John Wesley visited the islands in 1743. His followers have a large chapel and a resi-

dent minister at Hugh Town, and meeting-houses at Old Town and Holy Vale.

The Bible Christians have chapels on St. Mary's, St. Martin's, and St. Agnes, and three ministers, who do duty on each island in turn.

Stories of the Wrecks

VII

STORIES OF THE WRECKS

SCILLONIANS revel in a wreck, just as the soldier loves a battle and the fireman loves a fire. But theirs is a happier case than the soldier's, for their duty calls them to save life instead of to destroy it.

I remember hearing of a girl near the Land's End who had been describing a wreck and how she had taken the little babies from the arms of the rescuing seamen, and carried them up the shore, two at a time, to where they could be warmed and cared for. "A wreck is lovely," said she; "I'd go miles to see one. Of course I'm very sorry for the poor people, but oh, I do love to be there when there's a wreck!"

Here spake a true daughter of the sea, and the spirit that inspired her is the same that animates the brave fellows who man our life-

boats. And it is the spirit of the Scillonians. The love of wrecks is in their island-blood. Centuries of wrestling with the sea, and wresting from it the treasures it had stolen or was threatening to steal, have made this a part of their very nature. And how much better that it should be so; that the cry of "A wreck!" instead of inspiring them with horror and paralysing their efforts, should fill them with a kind of fearful joy, and nerve them to work wonders in saving life and property.

There is no need to say that to save human life is always their first consideration. If efforts in this direction are unsuccessful or only partially successful a gloom falls over the islands, and the salvage-seeking loses much of its zest; but when all lives are saved the joy is unmixed, and no pity is wasted on the insurance companies, who are usually the chief sufferers.

There may or there may not be any truth in the stories that long years ago Scillonians used to show their love of wrecks by doing their best to cause them. Nowadays it is certainly true that they make every effort to prevent one when they get the chance. But it too often happens



that the vessel is on the rocks before there is any consciousness of danger or signalling for help.

Now that the great sea-lights encircle the islands, and warn all vessels away from the danger-zone, it is seldom that any wrecks occur except during a continued fog. Fog was the cause of the great disaster in 1707, in which Sir Cloudesley Shovel lost his life, when four ships of the British fleet were wrecked on the western rocks. Fog, again, occasioned the loss of the "Schiller," the German mail-steamer that struck on the Retarrier Ledges in 1875, and went down, with a death-roll of three hundred and ten. There are many who remember the terrible gloom that hung over the islands at that time, and the making of that sad array of nameless graves in the little burial-ground of Old Church.

And it was fog that caused the wreck of the "Minnehaha," only last April, when that great Atlantic liner, 600 feet long, and drawing six fathoms of water—the largest vessel that has ever been wrecked at Scilly—struck upon the Scilly rock. She was bound from New York to London, and for three days it had been quite

impossible to take observations on account of fog. The look-out was searching eagerly for the "Bishop" light when suddenly rocks loomed up close to the vessel and the next moment she struck. The passengers, awakened by the shock, rushed on deck in great alarm, but being reassured by the captain, they went below again to dress. In a very short time boats arrived from Bryher, and the passengers, who were already in the ship's boats, were safely piloted to that island, where they were treated with all possible kindness. Provisions ran short, but fresh supplies were fetched from the ship. So little inconvenience did the passengers suffer that some of them declared that the nicest way of arriving in England was to be wrecked! They could not speak highly enough of the way in which they were treated by every one—and of the care that was taken not only of themselves but of their personal belongings, many of which had been left lying about in their cabins.

This was just the right kind of wreck, from the Scillonian point of view, for not a single life was lost, and there was a tremendous amount of salvage-work to be done in the weeks that

followed. For further details I cannot do better than quote some letters I received from a friend who was there all the time.

"ST. MARY'S, *April 18th.*

"The gun went last night or very early this morning. Of course I flew out of bed, and if it had not been for my landlady's nerves I would have flown out of doors. The noise of the gun had hardly ceased to vibrate when men came out of the houses and began to run, and it has puzzled me ever since to know if the Scillonians sleep in their clothes, for they had them on, and how they got into them passes my comprehension.

"The life-boat I heard launched with a cheer about ten minutes after.

"It was a thick fog, and the boat, as you will see by the papers, is the 'Minnehaha,' with a crew of 100, 64 passengers, and 300 cattle. She struck on the Scilly Rock, near Bryher; and I believe everybody is safe on Bryher by now. They hope to float the vessel off at full tide. They have wired to Penzance for the 'Lyonnesse' to come and fetch the passengers, so I

don't think she will worry about such trifles as our mails to-day.

(*Later the same day.*)

"'Wrecking' is delightful work. I feel quite capable now of tying a lantern to a cow's-horn. All morning I have been out in the damp fog, and all St. Mary's also. The policeman had to *shoo* the children into the school.

"They are now landing the passengers luggage, and a cheer went down the quay on the arrival of a large teddy-bear. The purser of the vessel says they have been in fog three days. They struck just where the cocoanut vessel struck before.

"All the boats rushed across to the wreck this morning, but the captain stood with a pistol in his hand and dared the men to come on board. When the vessel is proclaimed hopeless there *will* be a rush—thousands of tons of cargo on board, and they are throwing heaps overboard to try and get her off, but the universal prayer is that they won't, as it will be a harvest for Scilly. All the same, there is much sympathy with the captain.

(*Later still.*)

"The passengers have just arrived from Bryher, and considering they were wrecked whilst in their beds they look intensely respectable. They were chaffing and joking as they came up from the quay. The crew also are here, and sleeping, I think, in the Town Hall. Everybody is half crazy with excitement. Tons of stuff are being thrown overboard, and grand pianos and motor-cars are floating in Hell Bay. (Nice for your sketch !)

"*April 20th.*

"Between one hundred and two hundred men have come over from the mainland to help with the salvage, and they are sleeping in the Town Hall, Church Hall, Rechabite Hall, &c. Most of the crew leave to-morrow; the passengers got off yesterday, and will have reached London last night.

"What with the custom-house officers, salvage men, and police it is very difficult to smuggle anything, and so far I have only managed a pencil, not from lack of zeal but from lack of opportunity. Motor-cars and grand-pianos are towed in—in cases. I believe a grand piano

loose is of a sulky nature when in the sea, and instead of allowing itself to be towed it does its best to settle down comfortably at the bottom, and takes the boat with it if the rope is not quickly cut—at least, that is one experience of which I was told. The boats arrive laden with everything under the sun—clocks, and food, and anti-pain tablets, squirts, dress-lengths, wheels, typewriters, sewing-machines, phonographs, boxes of jewellery, boxes of oranges, barrels of apples, pencils, meat-skewers, and lots of tobacco and cigarettes. The policeman is kept quite busy trying to puzzle out the contents of the different boxes. One lady has lost a £1,500 motor-car. They say the value of the cargo is greater than that of all Scilly and Penzance put together. It is all insured, but unfortunately the vessel is not.

"The cattle are on Samson. The poor dears had to leap off the wreck into the water—a height as great as from the top of the church tower. To-day one could see the vessel quite well from here; it was not so foggy. I am hoping to get out to her soon,





but it would mean paying pounds at present, as the men are all so busy.

"I think most of the boys have been bad from smuggled cigarettes, and everybody is having a fine time.

"*April 26th.*

"I have just come in from the wreck; we went to Bryher this afternoon. The 'Minnehaha' is this side of the Scilly Rock, resting on a plateau of rock not far from Hell Bay. She does not look a bit as if she were wrecked. I believe they are putting bags of air under her in the hopes of raising her to float her off on some high tide. The divers are at work, but many do not expect to get her off unless they cut her in halves. One diver landed on an old wreck—one that had struck on Scilly some time ago.

"There is indignation amongst the men, as they have only been offered £2 a head for the cattle they saved, and last time they had £5; and they say these are larger and were more difficult to save.

"Wrecking is still the only topic with everybody. The goods are now being taken out of

the stores and shipped to London. There were twenty-six carts working on Saturday, and they stretched from the Post Office to the quay. Fifty tons of coffee was only one little item of salvage amongst many others."

Later came the welcome news that the "Minnehaha" had been successfully floated off. The rock was cleverly blasted away from inside of her, and with the help of several tugs she got clear away. Finally, with the pumps going all the time, she was able to make the journey to Falmouth by her own steam-power.

Quite another kind of wreck was that of the "Thomas W. Lawson," which occurred at Christmas-time in 1907, and made a great and painful sensation in the islands. She was a seven-masted sailing-vessel, one of the largest in the world. Her sails were named after the seven days of the week; they were worked by electricity, and could all be set in three minutes. Her anchor was also raised and lowered by electricity. She was bound for London from Boston, and carried a cargo of oil, many thousands of gallons of oil, in tanks.

There was a heavy gale blowing, and she signalled for a pilot to bring her into harbour. Pilot Hicks on St. Agnes was busy planting potatoes, but he threw down his spade at once, and went aboard of her. She was then out beyond Annet amongst the western rocks. A graphic description of what followed was given to us by an islander:—

"We stood at the door and watched her; we could see her lights still in the same place when we went to bed between ten and eleven o'clock, but in the morning she was gone. It is supposed she dragged her anchor in the night, or that the heavy seas broke both the anchor-chains. St. Mary's life-boat had been out to her, but their mast was broken, so they went back to repair it. Otherwise they would have stayed by her all night, and would probably have sunk with her when she went down. It was agreed that a flare should be sent up from the vessel if help was wanted from St. Agnes during the night, but no signal came. The gale increased in fury, and the vessel went down, and the pilot and nearly all on board were drowned.

"When she was knocked to pieces on the rocks, the tanks of oil escaped from her hold and burst open. The oil floated upon the waves; we could see it washing up here on the shore. At first we could not think what it was—it made the water look black; but soon we learnt from the smell—in fact, we were almost driven away by the smell. They say if it had caught fire it would have cleared the islands, it would have been like a sea of fire, and the smoke would have suffocated all the islanders. As it was, many of the rabbits and birds on Annet were killed by the oil, and lay dead upon the shore.

"It was a horrible time. Everything seemed to reek of the oil. The very spray on the windows ran down in oily blue streaks for long after, and even now, when eighteen months have passed, we can still smell it at times."

The pilot's son went off in a boat with some hope of finding his father; and then swam through the boiling surf with a rope round him and succeeded in rescuing two men, the captain and the engineer. They had been washed all

along the west coast of Annet to Hellweathers, where they were picked up. A third man was saved, but he lost his reason and died. All of them were simply saturated with the oil, besides being terribly beaten about, and with limbs broken.

The pilot's son had two magnificent gold watches sent him from America—one from the President of the United States, and the other from the owners of the vessel; and he was also awarded a silver medal for his great bravery.

Sometimes great risks are run in doing salvage work. The August before last there was a thick sea-fog, which lasted from Friday night to Sunday morning, and stopped the "Lyonnesse" from sailing. A grain-boat lost her bearings and struck on Lethegus' Ledge, off St. Agnes. The crew were all saved; but a man and a boy from Hugh Town who were at work on the cargo went down with the vessel when, without warning, she sank. If she had lasted a little longer, forty or fifty islanders would have been occupied in saving the bags of grain, and must infallibly have

been drowned. This tragedy attached a sad import to the notice which was posted up on the warehouses for weeks afterwards—"Maize for sale."

Annet and the Sea-birds

VIII

ANNET AND THE SEA-BIRDS

THE sea-birds are everywhere in Scilly. All the year round the gulls fill the air with their cries, and cormorants and shags skim the water and dive beneath its surface.

No "Scilly-scape," if I may use the word, seems complete without a few gulls. We see them circling and wheeling high above us; dropping, suddenly, to rest upon the dancing waves; chasing each other in turn from the tops of the chimneys; sitting in rows on the ridges of the roofs; quarrelling for fish over St. Mary's Pool; following the plough or harrow in greedy quest of worms; or standing stock-still on the rocks or sands, at equal distances from each other, and all primly facing the same way.

Herring-gulls, black-headed, and great and lesser black-backed are all plentiful.

The black-backed gulls are fierce and savage fellows. They will carry off young guillemots and kittiwakes in their powerful beaks when the parent-bird is out of the way, and kill and eat them; and they are ruthless robbers of eggs.

The great cormorant, or sea-crow (from the French of which latter name, "corbeau marin," his ordinary name is taken) is not so common in Scilly as the smaller kind, the green or crested cormorant, or shag.

Shags may be seen in great numbers round the islands, swimming so low in the water that they look only like the tops of walking-sticks above the waves; and propelling their thin and keel-shaped bodies forward by using their wings as oars. Suddenly they disappear head-first into the water, reappearing after what seems a very long time, in quite a different direction, and some distance away.

All cormorants are voracious (is not their very name a by-word for greed?), and they consume great quantities of fish, so they are no friend to the fisherman.



CALIFORNIA

Shags are amongst the earliest breeders, and they are worth watching during their love-making, rubbing their snaky heads together and performing strange, ungainly antics. They make rough, untidy nests, with three or four eggs, on many of the uninhabited islands. If you go near them when they are sitting on their eggs, they will hiss at you like geese.

In spring tens of thousands of visitors arrive in flocks, for the breeding-season—puffins, Manx shearwaters, guillemots, razor-bills, terns, storm-petrels, and many non-resident gulls.

The island of Annet (*i.e.*, Little Agnes) is the largest breeding-ground. It is a low-lying, sandy tract, serpentine in shape, rising towards the north to a height of sixty feet, and surrounded by dangerous rocks. It is covered with bracken and tufts of the sea-thrift, which latter is in full flower during the breeding-season, making a bright pink background for the white and black plumage of the birds.

Annet is known by the name of "Bird Island," from the immense numbers that breed there. In the early summer the sea all round is black

with puffins and razor-bills, their white breasts being hardly noticeable as they sit on the surface of the water; and the air above is dark with clouds of gulls, and full of their ceaseless cry. Puffins (also called sea-parrots) have bred on the islands from time immemorial. An old name for them was "Coulter-neb," from the peculiar shape of their beaks, which were thought to resemble the coulter of a plough.

They were formerly much esteemed for food, chiefly pickled and salted, because by this means their rank and fishy flavour was disguised; and one imagines the three hundred puffins payable at Michaelmas for the rent of the islands in the time of Edward I. must have been destined for treating in this way rather than for eating fresh.

William of Worcester, writing in 1478, records the presence of "pophyns" on Rascow (*i.e.*, Tresco); and Richard Carew (1602) says "The Puffyn hatcheth in holes of the cliffe, whose young ones are thence ferreted out, being exceedingly fat, kept salted, and reputed for fish, as comming nearest thereto in their taste."

Their flesh used to be allowed by the Church on Lenten days.

It is a most ludicrous-looking bird during the breeding-season, for then its beak becomes enlarged to double its usual depth, quite out of proportion to the dimensions of its owner. And not only is the size of the beak remarkable, but it is gorgeously coloured with carmine, blue-grey, and yellow; so that for a bird which carries a sober yellow-brown beak all the winter it must be almost embarrassing to appear in such a garish guise! The legs are a bright orange-red, a ring of carmine encircles the eye, and altogether, with his black coat and white waistcoat, he presents a very striking appearance.

The puffin is entirely an oceanic bird, only coming to land to breed. It lays its solitary egg at the end of a long burrow dug in the sand or peat. The isle of Annet is simply honeycombed with these burrows, so that it is impossible to walk even a few steps without finding the ground give way beneath one's feet, and sinking, sometimes knee-deep, into the soft soil. The springy tufts of sea-pink which

cover the island offer more resistance and a firmer foothold than the sandy earth.

By the end of April the birds are busy digging a new hole with their sharp nails, or overhauling that of the previous year. In making the hole they throw themselves upon their backs, and with their bill and claws burrow inwards, until they have made a hole perhaps eight to ten feet long, and sometimes with several windings and turnings.

A week or ten days after the hole is ready a single round white egg is laid. Both birds assist in digging the burrow, and also in hatching, which takes about a month. Sometimes a forsaken rabbit-hole will save the pair the labour of digging out a habitation for themselves; and occasionally, where a spot between three stones has been carefully chosen for excavation, one may see a lintel and door-jambs of granite forming the entrance into the burrow! Puffins and Manx shearwaters will sometimes share the same hole; or they will have a common entrance with passages branching out in several directions, as in some of our "desirable residential flats."

They feed their young on the fry of certain fish, and are particularly fond of the lance, or sand-eel. The parent bird may be seen returning to the burrow, with numbers of small fish hanging from its bill. How it could retain its hold of, say, the first nine caught while capturing the tenth used to be a subject for wondering conjecture: but an examination of the inside of the beak has shown an arrangement of barbed hooks projecting backwards, on which each fish is speared as it is caught. The discovery of this wonderful provision of nature is due to Mr. C. J. King of St. Mary's.

Visitors are only allowed to stay an hour at a time on Annet during the breeding-season, out of consideration for the birds; and the Governor strictly forbids the shooting of the birds or the taking of their eggs. If, in defiance of this or out of curiosity, you thrust your hand into one of the burrows, you will very likely get a piece bitten out of it, and it will serve you right!

The shearwater becomes very eloquent when disturbed in its hole, and pours forth guttural melodies, the sounds of which are imitated

in the nick-names of "Cockathodan" and "Crew," bestowed upon it by Scillonians. Goldsmith compares the disagreeable sound they make when taken to "the efforts of a dumb person attempting to speak." This bird is largely nocturnal in its habits, resting or sleeping on the water during a part of the day, and fishing chiefly at night.

The guillemot breeds on several of the rocky islands, Gorregan and Mincarlo among the number. It lays its large and beautiful egg on narrow ledges of the bare rock, without any sort of protection, so that it soon gets dirty and can sometimes hardly be distinguished from a lump of clay. But for the long and pointed shape of the egg, which causes it to roll round in a circle when disturbed, it would probably never remain on the ledge long enough to be hatched; for if it were round, like puffins' eggs, at the slightest touch it would roll over into the sea beneath. The colour of the egg varies very greatly; it is dark blue, a lighter or greenish blue, white, or even claret colour, but always covered with black spots and markings.

The graceful terns, or sea-swallows, visit Scilly in great numbers in the spring, as also do the razor-bills (otherwise known as the common or black auk). The latter may be seen sitting in rows on the rocks in company with puffins and shags. The ledges of rock rising one above another, and the birds sitting on them, have been compared to the shelves and pots of a chemist's shop. Like the puffin and the storm-petrel, razor-bills rarely leave the sea except for breeding.

The storm-petrel is a visitor in Scilly, and may be seen there "walking on the water" in the strange way peculiar to it; and on account of this habit it is supposed to derive its name from that of the Apostle Peter.

The scarlet-legged oyster-catcher, or "sea-pie," makes Annet its breeding-ground; as also do many of the terns. The oyster-catcher's eggs are laid on the loose shingle, and from their close resemblance to the rounded pebbles of the seashore they are not easily noticed, even if you search carefully for them.

Any one who has not before had the opportunity of seeing a breeding-ground of the sea-

birds will find a visit to Annet in the early summer quite a revelation, for no imagination could picture these myriads of birds, darkening the air with their wings as they wheel and hover, screaming, over their temporary home.

St. Mary's

IX

ST. MARY'S

WHEN you come to Scilly you naturally land first upon St. Mary's Island, for there is the quay, where the steamer from England unloads her passengers and cargo.

You may or may not on first arriving feel capable of appreciating the picturesqueness of the stone walls and gateway of the quay, with Star Castle appearing on the hill behind; but through this gateway you must pass in order to enter the town. The pier now in use has only been built just over seventy years, and was lengthened twenty years ago; yet already again the sand is silting up against it, and making it less serviceable.

From the pier you can see the houses of Hugh Town stretching in a long line round the curve of St. Mary's Pool, the back walls

of many of them rising straight out of the sea, if it happens to be high-water of a spring-tide.

This Hugh Town on St. Mary's Island is the metropolis, port, and shopping centre of the little archipelago, and, generally speaking, the hub of the Scillonian universe. Formerly the presence of the fort behind it gave it yet another kind of importance, and made it the centre of the military as well as of the civil life. It is built chiefly on the narrow sandy neck which unites the promontory of the "Heugh" or "Hugh" (now better known as Garrison Hill) to the rest of the island.

Over and over again the prophets of evil have foretold that one day there would come some big sea and wash the little town away. Several times in days gone by the sea has entered the houses, carrying off the furniture, and driving the inhabitants to the upper floors; the waves have even swept across the isthmus from Porth Cressa to St. Mary's Pool; but the banks have been raised since then, so still the little town stands, and the inhabitants seem to entertain no fears for their safety. The houses were built when the people feared



foreign foes more than they feared the sea, so they clustered close under the shelter of Garrison Hill and Star Castle that crowns it.

The formation of Hugh Town is of necessity strictly determined by the shape of the land on which it is built. There is a group of houses just under Garrison Hill; and then a narrow, winding street runs the length of the sandy strip between the two bays, with a few short branch-streets where there happens to be room. As the isthmus widens out to join the main island the principal street also widens and divides into two branches, one of which soon ends in the country road leading to "Old Town" (of which more anon), and the other follows for a short distance the curve of St. Mary's Pool, but also soon becomes a country road, and leads into the heart of the island.

It has been suggested that the Hugh, which gives its name to the town, was once, like Plymouth Hoe, the station for the "huer," who stands on high places to indicate to fishermen by a particular "hue" or cry the approach and direction of shoals of fish; and that the Gugh,

a similar promontory connected with St. Agnes, is a corruption of the same word.

At the fork of the main street there is an open space known as "The Parade," because it was there that the soldiers used to drill. When the garrison no longer existed this space was used as a dumping-ground for salvage from wrecks, and for years it looked like an untidy shipwright's yard, with all manner of appurtenances and portions of ships laid out to be sold by auction. In the houses on all the islands you may often come across relics of the wrecks; perhaps a lock from a cabin-door, or even a whole door; and sometimes the partition between two rooms will show clear signs of a nautical origin. "The inhabitants," says Lieutenant Heath, "have wreck-furniture of various kinds sent them by the hand of Providence."

Now the centre of the Parade is a grass-plot, surrounded by shrubs and beds of flowers, and is dignified by the name of "The Park."

Nearly all the houses in Scilly are built of the grey granite of which the islands are formed. They are generally roofed with tiles or slate,

to which a hoary appearance is given by the addition of a coat of cement as an extra protection against the weather. The old way of roofing was with thatch, tied on with ropes, crossed in a chessboard pattern and fastened to iron or wooden pegs driven into the chinks of the stone walls a little way below the eaves. This was necessary to keep the roof from being blown away. Still here and there in Hugh Town, and more frequently in Old Town and on the off-islands, these picturesque thatched cottages are to be seen.

Duke Cosmo, to whom a thatched roof was quite unknown in his native Italy, was much impressed by those he saw in Scilly, but he altogether misunderstood their construction! He says: "The house-roofs are nothing but a simple mat, spread over the rafters, drawn tight all round, and fixed firmly to the top of the walls."

On one of the off-islands there is a very primitive device for weighting down the slate roof of a chapel by the sea—just a stout rope thrown across the ridge, and tied at each end to a large mass of granite on the ground, with

sods placed underneath the rope at the sharp edges to prevent its being cut.

It is said that formerly the houses of Hugh Town were built of turf with thatched roofs; but once in the summer, when all the men were out at sea, a fire broke out and the town was burned to the ground; so since then the houses have been built of stone.

The streets of Hugh Town are lighted with oil-lamps, for which the necessary funds were partly raised by means of a concert. The inhabitants paid for music, and they got illumination into the bargain! These lamps are not burned in the wasteful way to which we are accustomed in London and elsewhere. I asked a Scillonian, half in fun, whether they *always* kept their lamps alight as late as half-past nine. He replied in sober earnest: "Oh no, only if there is no moon; and on clear moonlight evenings we do not light them at all."

But though the lights are put out early, the lamp-lighter is (to use a mixed metaphor) no cut-and-dried automaton, bound with red tape, and devoid of human feelings. If he sees you

returning home as he goes his round, he will wait to see you safely indoors before letting the velvet dark drop down like a veil over the streets.

Not far from the quay a steep little hill bordered by trees leads up to the Garrison, which is entered through a strong stone gateway. Above it hangs a bell, used formerly, when there was no public clock, to announce the time of day. There is a tablet beneath the bell with the inscription "G.R. 1742. F.G." Lower down are two larger initials, "A.T.," those of Abraham Tovey, the master-gunner, under whose direction the works were constructed, and who, being the "man on the spot," saw to it that his memory should be kept green by letters of a larger size than those which commemorated the King and the Governor.

Star Castle, on the top of Garrison Hill, is not a very imposing building. Its name, which used to be "Stella Mariae" (Star of Mary), is derived from the star-like plan of its projecting bastions, which surround a dwelling-house with corresponding projections. The walls are loop-holed for musketry at every possible point,

ninety-six loopholes altogether. Above the entrance are the initials of Queen Elizabeth, "E.R.," and the date, "1593," when the Castle was built.

Prisoners from the mainland have been confined here from time to time; Dr. Bastwick, of Colchester, in 1637, by order of the Star Chamber, for writing against the Church and Government; in 1655 John Biddle, the Unitarian, was sent to Scilly by Cromwell to keep him out of the way of his persecutors, and allowed a pension of 10s. a week; and in 1681 seven "Popish priests" were removed thither from Newgate.

It is a very beautiful walk round Garrison Hill—a walk of which one can never tire. Heath compares it to "the Mall at St. James's, where people walk for health and amusement"; but to the nature-lover the Mall is dull indeed compared with Garrison Hill. The circuit can easily be made in half an hour, for the distance is not more than a mile and a half; and yet in that short time a sight of nearly all the islands, and a good idea of their relative position, can be obtained.

From the north one looks down on St. Mary's Pool, full of brown-sailed fishing-boats in the early summer, and never without a sprinkling of craft, large or small, upon its bosom. Beyond the Pool, to the right, may be seen the country-side of St. Mary's, and following on, one after the other from east to west, St. Martin's Isle; Tean; St. Helen's, with the lighthouse tower of Round Island showing over its head; the wooded slopes of Tresco, and Cromwell's Castle low down on its western shore, clearly visible across three miles of sea; green, hilly little Bryher; and the twin peaks of Samson.

As one bears round to the west and south-west, there are St. Agnes, and Annet, and the grim rocks of the western archipelago, with the white foam ever, even in the calmest weather, playing round their feet, and flying over their heads. On clear days the waves may be seen leaping up the slender shaft of the Bishop Lighthouse, more than five miles away.

On the south there is the illimitable ocean; and as the east side is reached there come into sight, first the rocky head of Peninnis, and then

the curve of Porth Cressa, overlooked by Buzza Hill and the ruined windmill that crowns it. A little farther on, and the massive walls of the Garrison reach their highest, and are draped and curtained with mesembryanthemum; while beneath their shelter there are orchards full of fruit-trees, carpeted with daffodils; and one can see the columns of blue smoke rising from the chimneys of Hugh Town, which lies below.

In making the circuit of the hill we have kept our eyes fixed seaward all the way; but if we turn towards the hill itself we see that almost everywhere it is afire with gorse: and sorely it tempts me to tell again the oft-told tale of Linnæus and Putney Hill!

The gorse is one of the great glories of the islands; it grows on almost every open down, and on the slope of almost every hill. On a calm summer's day, when the hot sun brings out the sweet and heavy odour, and the drowsy hum of myriads of bees, garnering their store from the golden blossoms, mingles with the gentle lapping of the sea upon the shore, then Scilly becomes a veritable land of the lotos-

eaters, and one feels content to do no more than lie upon a slope of springy heather, and "watch the crisping ripples on the beach, and tender curving lines of creamy spray."

It is only since the latter part of the sixteenth century that Hugh Town has become the capital of the islands. Before that time there was another town whose houses clustered round the Castle of Ennor, a mile away from the present capital. The village that now remains is known as Old Town, and the bay on which it stands as Old Town Bay.

There is a tradition that when Old Town was the chief town of St. Mary's, and when the chief landing-place of the island was in this bay, the monks levied a toll on all persons landing, and a chain was stretched across from Tolman Head to bar their entrance until the toll had been paid.

Great complaints were made to Richard, Earl of Cornwall, of the burden of this charge, which was levied even on priests and pilgrims, and on every fisherman when he came in with his catch. In answer to these complaints the Earl came himself, disguised as a pilgrim; and being refused entrance, he leapt over the chain, and in

the heat of his anger struck the Prior who had thwarted him a mortal blow. The old priest with his last breath called down vengeance on his murderer; and to this curse was attributed the gradual decay of Old Town and its castle.

A portion of the old church near Old Town is still standing, but it now serves chiefly as a mortuary chapel. It dates from very early times, for there is a Norman arch at one end; and it was used, although sadly in want of repair, until a new church was built in Hugh Town in 1838. This little churchyard by the blue waters of Old Town Bay is still the burial-ground of St. Mary's, and contains sad memorials of many wrecks. The graves are overshadowed by dracæna palm-trees, and round them grow aloes and euonymus-shrubs, all symbols by their evergreenness of the immortality of the soul; while the elm-trees which look so dead and lifeless now, but which will soon burst into fresh life at the touch of Spring, remind us of the old story which is ever new, and speak to us of the hope of resurrection.

Of the Castle of Ennor, which was built probably by the Earls of Cornwall under the

Norman kings, and where, as we know, Ranulph de Blankminster lived six hundred years ago, scarce one stone is left upon another. From Hugh Town one comes to all that is left of it by a road bordered (as most roads are in Scilly) by flower-fields on the right and on the left; past masses of fragrant wallflowers and beds of sweet violets, until the curve of Old Town Bay is reached, with the houses of Old Town grouped together at its farther end.

The Castle Rocks rise steeply from the midst of the houses, and up them one must clamber. There is nothing whatever to show what was the original way of entrance into the fortress, but probably it was on the east side, where the ground slopes up more gently. On the north and west the approach would be impossible, for there a mass of solid granite rises boldly from the plain below.

When Leland visited the islands, somewhere about 1539, this castle was a "moderately strong pile," but it is said that many of the stones were carried away for the building of Star Castle, later in the same century. Now the pile of rocks, and the slopes leading up to

the rocks, are all covered with vegetation, beds of narcissi and daffodils, sheltered by veronica hedges, and large patches of carnations, not yet in flower; while mesembryanthemum ramps all over the place, covering nearly every bit of wall and uncultivated ground, and pouring itself down in thick cascades of green from the topmost summit of the Castle Rocks.

From half-way up can be seen, spread out beneath, field upon field of yellow daffodils, stretching away across the island almost as far as to Porth Mellin; and beyond the streak of blue sea are the twin hills of Samson.

It is very quiet and peaceful up here, and yet if one sets oneself to listen, numberless sounds may be heard, so many that it is difficult to disentangle them.

There is the gentle plash of the waves on the sands of Old Town Bay behind; the shrill cry of the gulls, sounding for all the world like the clamour of children let loose from school; the distant panting of the fussy little motor-boat which takes the trawlers out to sea; the lowing of cattle in the neighbouring farmyard, with pigs and poultry joining in



the chorus; the twitter and rustle of birds in the veronica hedge; the liquid love-song of a thrush as he puts the important question, "*Will* you, *will* you, *will* you?" and answers it himself with a sudden change of note, "She *will*, she *will*, she *will*." And lying beneath and around all other sounds are the myriad gentle murmurs of the Spring, that wondrous stirring and pulsation of life which can be felt but cannot be defined. And now a human note breaks in upon the rest. From a cottage near by there rises the song of a little girl, mingling with the clatter of cups and saucers as she washes up the breakfast-things, because mother is busy in the tying-shed.

> "With smiles of peace and looks of love
> Light in our dwellings we may make,"

shrills the childish voice; and so on through every verse to the end, till she finishes with a quaintly quavering and long-drawn-out, "A-a-amen."

There is a very human legend which connects this old Castle with the convent that is said to have stood in Holy Vale.

The story runs that the Earl of Cornwall once had a young and beautiful ward, whom he kept shut up in the Castle of Ennor in charge of an ancient duenna. No one knew who the lovely girl was, but she was thought to be of noble birth.

There was a page in attendance at the Castle; and it is not to be wondered at if the hearts of this young pair, isolated as they were from others of their age and station, were drawn together by a mutual attraction.

Signs of this did not escape the lynx-eyes of the ancient dame, and she straightway sent a message to the Earl in Cornwall by the hands of the page, who little knew that he was the bearer of that which sealed his own fate and that of her he loved. He was detained on the mainland, and made an esquire in the Earl's following, while she was ordered to be sent at once to the convent of Holy Vale.

She remained sad and silent during the year of her novitiate, taking interest in nothing except the tending of a rose-bush, which she made her special care. When the time came for her to take the vows, she mysteriously

disappeared from the chapel where she was keeping midnight vigil, and was seen no more until, many years later, she was found in that same chapel, lying dead before the altar, with no signs of age upon her pure face, and with a cluster of roses in her bosom.

Her lover is said to have been killed in battle many years before.

There is still a rose-tree growing up between the stones at Holy Vale, which the children used to look upon as the bush of Sister Mary.

There are no remains of the convent at Holy Vale, and there is only tradition to tell us that it ever existed. Whitfeld, writing in 1852, does indeed speak of the top of a free-stone arch which he saw there, covering the entrance of a pig-sty, and which he supposes to have been a relic of the ancient monastic buildings. It is a beautiful sheltered spot, the most sheltered in the island, hidden away in a hollow, and surrounded by tall trees. Two farm-houses lie close together in the valley, near to a pond of fresh water under the trees; and on every side there are the fields of flowers, now the chief produce of the farms.

One of the pioneers of the flower industry, Mr. Mumford, used to live at Holy Vale.

The other, Mr. William Trevellick, was still living, at Rocky Hill on St. Mary's, until last spring, and was always ready to show his beautiful gardens to any one who wished to see them. Rows of palm-trees grow along the hedges at Rocky Hill, and form the boundary lines. "Look well at this," Mr. Trevellick used to say. "It is not often that you will see in the British Isles a field surrounded by palm-trees." He dearly loved his garden, and spent most of his time there. The robins knew him so well that even in summer-time at his call of "Dick, Dick" they would come and eat from his hand the food he kept ready for them in his capacious pockets.

Mr. Trevellick was also keenly interested in antiquities, and had collected at Rocky Hill a number of relics of the past of every description — ancient stone querns, quaint gaily-coloured figure-heads from wrecks, Parliamentary cannon-balls, and a Druid trysting-stone, through the hole in which lovers used to clasp their hands when they plighted their

troth. This last is in two halves, both of which had been built into a stone hedge; the second half was not discovered till many years after the first, and if you know anything of antiquarians, you can picture the joy with which its discovery was hailed! It was a day's work to pull down the stone hedge, to secure the treasure, and then to build the wall up as before.

It was always a matter of great interest to Mr. Trevellick that an old Roman road runs through the Rocky Hill gardens, the large, evenly-laid paving-stones showing very few signs of their age.

St. Mary's Island is supposed to be nine miles round, but I would defy any one to restrict his first walk round it to nine miles. One is sure to be decoyed into many a by-path meadow—but not of the kind in which there lurks a Giant Despair!

For beauty-spots are to be found in such plenty on St. Mary's that it would be impossible to name them all. I have already spoken of the gorse-covered Garrison Hill, which is itself a little nest of beauty-spots. So in its way is

Peninnis, "head of the island," that wild and rugged peninsula which juts out between Porth Cressa and the Old Town Bay, and is sometimes thought to be the most beautiful part of St. Mary's. It is strewn and scattered all along its coast with rocks and boulders of immense size, and of endless variety of form. I have already referred to two of these, which go by the names of the Pulpit and the Tooth. Close to the Tooth, on the head of Peninnis, there rises from the sea a huge rock, which is known as the Monk's Cowl, from the fancied resemblance of the summit to a hooded head. From this point there is one of the finest views of the many-coloured rocks, covered here and there with shaggy grey-green lichen, standing boldly out of the sea or tumbled about in every direction, and with the little island of St. Agnes bordering the horizon. During a big storm the waves will dash right over the top of the Monk's Cowl, and will swish along the top of the down behind it, before retreating in cascades of foam.

Not far away, hidden amongst a mass of other rocks, is the largest logan-stone in Scilly, which



CALIFORNIA

is estimated to weigh 313½ tons. It is at least 15 feet high, and forms one side of a cavity, known as "Sleep's Abode." It can easily be rocked by two or three persons together, but was only discovered to be a logan-stone in 1893, when a man who was leaning against it in a high gale, felt it moving gently to and fro beneath him.

The rugged coast-line of Peninnis may be followed, past the Pulpit Rock, to where the ground slopes down towards the Old Town Bay, on the shores of which will be seen the old church, partly hidden in palm-trees.

There are many other spots on St. Mary's which are well worth a visit. There is the beautiful, peaceful bay known as Porth Hellick, almost closed across its mouth by a reef of rocks, so that when the sea is raging without it may be quite calm in the bay. But peaceful as it looks, it has now and again seen some sad sights.

It was here that the body of Sir Cloudesley Shovel was washed up, and found, but not recognised, by a soldier and his wife, who gave the great Admiral a nameless grave in the

sand of the seashore. Later the body was dug up, and identified by means of a ring on one finger; and now it is buried, as all the world knows, in Westminster Abbey. But it is said that the hollow in the sand would never fill up, and the grass would never grow again over the place where the grave had been. Within recent years two blocks of quartz have been placed to mark the spot.

There was another remarkable happening at Porth Hellick in 1840. A vessel was found on the rocks, bottom-upwards, by some farmers gathering seaweed for manure. One of them thrust his hand into a hole in her side, and was terrified to feel it grasped from within. This capsized vessel had entombed four men for three days and nights! They were crouched close together under the keel, with the water up to their waists. They had tried to cut a hole in the hull for the sake of getting air, but fortunately their knife broke, for the confined air alone prevented the vessel from sinking altogether.

Some pilot-boats had taken her in tow the previous afternoon, and brought her in towards

the islands; but having no suspicion that she bore a living freight, they had abandoned her on account of bad weather.

Porth Hellick may be reached from Old Town over Sallakee Downs, following the line of the wild and rocky coast, and then past Giant's Castle, the ruined remains of one of those ancient "cliff-castles," such as are common on the Cornish coast.

The beautiful bay with its sandy beach comes upon one with quite a surprise, when first from the top of the downs its shimmering blue waters are seen.

Or it may be approached another way, through the undulating flower-fields of Sallakee Farm, past the whitewashed farm-house and its gnarled pollard elm-trees, and along a narrow lane whose hedges in summer are sweet with honeysuckle and pink with campion. This lane will bring one right out on the low grassy moorland which borders the bay.

Porth Hellick is the mouth of a valley which cuts into the island at this point, and in which lies the pond of the Upper Moors, the largest expanse of fresh water on St. Mary's, surrounded

by marshy ground grown with reeds, and the home of many water-fowl.

Overhanging the bay there is a fine carn of rocks, known as Dick's Carn, also called "The Loaded Camel," from its shape.

The rocky ramparts of the isle begin again immediately beyond the bay, with a wild confusion of mighty boulders, trembling on the brink of precipices, or poised upon the grassy slope, as if ready at any moment to crash into the seething waters. Here one may listen to the booming of Nature's guns, as the sea thuds into the caverns it has hollowed out for itself.

And then, farther to the north, there is Toll's Island, in Pelistry Bay, at low water joined to the main island, like the Gugh of St. Agnes, by a narrow strip of white sand, which is covered at high tide by the waves. Here, if one is young enough for such employ, one may build on the sand Hugh Towns in miniature, with Toll's Island to represent Garrison Hill, and then watch the waves creeping, creeping slowly up on either side until they meet and embrace, and mingle and merge into one even flow over the ruins of the sand-houses. Or one may

seek for shells on the sandy strip, and small as is the hunting ground the variety is infinite—deep golden yellow, coral-pink, purple, and blue. There are remains of an old battery on the island, "Pellew's Redoubt," so called after the captain who commanded in Scilly during the last French War.

Here, as everywhere, there are flowers. The daffodil-fields run down close to the sea, and the little lane leading to Toll's Island blazes with gorse on either side, so that the blue waters of the bay are seen set in a frame of gold.

Watermill Bay is another beauty-spot, with no watermill, but only a tiny stream trickling down to the sea, through the midst of bracken and bramble.

I must not try to describe it all, or I would tell of the lovely walk along the west coast of St. Mary's, where the golf-links are, whence one can look back on Hugh Town, which from here seems to be a mere slender thread linking Garrison Hill with the main island.

And I would tell you, if I could, of the gorgeous, indescribable sunsets, which turn sea

and sky into flaming fire, and cast a magic glow over the land, bewitching and glorifying even commonplace things, and making each little distant island a fairy palace of enchantment, to which one longs to sail.

But long, long before it could be reached the illusion would have faded, the sun would have set, and no enchanted palace would be found, but only a barren rock set in a dangerous sea, with the darkness gathering around.

Tresco

X

TRESCO

IN old days the island of Tresco was singled out from all the others to be the site of a monastery and its accompanying church, and on this account it acquired a reputation differing from, if not greater than, that of the other islands.

Nearly three hundred years after the departure of the monks, Tresco was again singled out from all the others, this time by Mr. Augustus Smith, the Governor, who made his home there, building a house near the ruins of the old abbey church, and planting round it the gardens which have since become famous far and wide.

Two determining factors were probably common to both decisions—the central and sheltered position of the island, and the

abundant supply of fresh water in the large "Abbey" Pond and its smaller neighbour.

Of the Abbey of St. Nicholas, built by the Benedictine monks of Tavistock, no signs are to be seen. Only two pointed arches of reddish stone and about 25 feet of granite wall are left to show us where the abbey church once stood; the monastery itself has entirely disappeared. In point of decoration, these arches are so very plain that it is not easy to date them; but, judging from their proportion, we cannot be far wrong in assuming that they were built during the fourteenth century. At that period the abbey must have reached the zenith of its prosperity, declining again to what Leland calls "a poor celle of monks" before the dissolution of the monasteries.

The church is thought to have been burnt down—perhaps by Cromwell's forces in the Civil War. Towards the end of the eighteenth century a large piece of a bombshell and some charred timber were found amongst some stones and rubbish at the west end of the ruins, by a man who was clearing the ground to make more room for burying the dead; and cannon-balls

have been dug up near by in the gardens from time to time.

As late as 1820 the people of Tresco were still burying their dead by the ivy-covered ruins of the old church, with the idea that its great age gave the neighbouring ground a greater sanctity than the churchyard of their parish church. Troutbeck tells us that in his time the earth upon the old flagstones of the floor was sufficient in depth to dig a reasonable grave.

Flowers now run riot round the tombstones—agapanthus, blue and white; hydrangeas bearing pink and blue blossoms on the same bush; and the sweet-smelling lily-of-the-valley: cluster-roses try to bury once more with their petals the already-buried dead, or thrust out their branches and tender young shoots to creep beneath the covering slab, forcing it up by slow degrees, as if they would anticipate the general resurrection.

The gardens which surround the old ruins contain all manner of rare tropical plants, shrubs, and trees, which in this warm corner only of the British Isles will consent to grow and flourish out of doors. I cannot attempt

by any description to do justice to these marvels of the vegetable world. The botanist who can recognise at sight a podocarpus andina or a pittisporum tobia will here find himself in paradise; but to the uninitiated the homelier and more familiar growths are more attractive—the blazing masses of rhododendrons and azaleas, the sheets of narcissi under shadowing palm-trees, the tall hydrangeas and camellias, fuchsias and myrtles that border the paths.

And what no one can fail to appreciate is the situation of the gardens, which rise in terraces from very little above the sea-level up to the height of 100 feet. As you mount to the upper terraces and look back, you will catch sight of the sea, through and beyond the masses of flower and leaf; and from the very top you will see spread out beneath you the surrounding islands, showing pearly grey-green or with a tender warmth of colour against the sea, and each with its little rim of white sand at low tide, except where the rocks run down to the water's edge.

We have come to stay on Tresco, and have

landed at the pier beneath Carn Near, with almost as large a boat-load of people as the dinghy of the launch will hold. We have to go and look for lodgings, so we soon part company from the rest, who turn off to the right for the Abbey Gardens, while we keep to the left. We have been recommended to stay at the "Canteen," in other words, the "New Inn," but it is enough to call it *the* Inn, for Tresco boasts no other; and this one combines the advantages of a general shop as well.

It is about a mile's walk to the Inn—a lovely walk by the sea, and one that we know well, but cannot know too well. It takes us first over sandy downs, covered with long grass, and a little farther on with sheets of the mesembryanthemum edule, whose mass of fleshy green spikes will soon be spangled with large pale yellow blossoms. In the autumn the air is full of a sweet and rather sickly smell (something like American apples) given out by the Hottentot fig, which is the sequel to the yellow blossom. As the fruit ripens, the green spikes around it turn to flaming orange and crimson, so that the plant seems almost to have burst again into

bloom. The soft and creamy-coloured fruit, which will readily shell out from its enclosing green case, is in shape very like the sycamore fig. It contains a mass of brown seeds, like the seeds of a fig, held in a thick, sweet, transparent juice.

I may say of it, as Mark Twain said of the tamarinds of Honolulu, that only strangers eat it, and they only eat it once! I always like to speak from experience where possible, so I played the stranger's part and tasted the sticky mess, but I cannot honestly recommend it!

Our path still follows the coast-line; and soon Cromwell's Castle comes into view in the distance, and plays bo-peep with us round the headlands for the rest of the way. This old fortress in its beautiful setting seems to have the art of always looking its best. Whether it shows up pearly white in the distance against the blue of sea and sky, or grey-brown in the diffused light of a cloudy day; touched with warm glow by the sunset, or stern and gloomy beneath the thunder-cloud; whether one catches sight of it from above or below, from sea or shore, from Tresco or Bryher, from north, south,

east, or west, it always has the same indefinable attraction.

Presently we see before us the harbour of New Grimsby, with houses built round the bay, on the shores of which the Parliamentary forces encamped in 1665. The large fresh-water pond a little farther inland is known as the Abbey Pond. Those old monks might always be trusted to settle near a good supply of water, and the eels and tench it contained would not be despised by them. The reeds which grow round this pond are used by Tresconians for making very high fences to protect their flower-fields from the wind—very like the fences of African villages, so that one could almost imagine Kaffir kraals instead of flowers to be hidden behind them.

The skeleton of an old derelict still hangs together on the shore of the bay. She was a coal-schooner, carrying a cargo of furnace-coal, and was dismasted outside the islands one New Year's Day about fourteen years ago. The crew were at breakfast when she came to grief, but they hurriedly left their tinned meat and coffee (left also, I regret to say, their dog, which was

found on the wreck), took to their small boat, and were picked up by a passing vessel. The derelict was found by men of Bryher, and was afterwards towed into New Grimsby Harbour. Thither came her captain to examine her, but he found her not worth repairing, and sold her as she stood to the Governor. Now her cargo has been used up, and she herself has contributed to the making of fences, &c. and is pretty nearly used up too.

But we are a long time getting to our Inn; and when we do at last arrive it is only to find that every room is occupied. Until yesterday they were without visitors, but a recent influx of two ladies has been sufficient to fill all their available space! So we are fain to seek elsewhere.

And it requires some search, for the flower-season is not the best time for getting rooms on the off-islands. Space, as well as time, is much occupied with the flowers; and sometimes every downstairs-room is stocked with pots and basins, jars and bottles, full of daffodils and narcissi, while the ordinary furniture is pushed just anywhere to get it out of the way.

We are beginning to lose hope. Every one is very kind, but "no space," "no time," or "no food," is always the difficulty. (Provisions, as a rule, are obtained weekly from Penzance.)

Must we retrace our steps to the little post-office, and ignominiously wire to the launch to come and fetch us and our baggage back again to St Mary's? But no; at last in a little four-roomed thatched cottage at the farthest extremity from the beginning of our search, we find a refuge.

We are now on the east side of Tresco, on the shores of "Old Grimsby," which is almost opposite the harbour of New Grimsby on the west side. From the windows of the little cottage there is a lovely view across the bay. On the headland which shuts it in on the south there are the ruins of an old fortress, called by Troutbeck "The Block-house"; in the distance is St. Martin's Isle, with other smaller islets —mere barren rocks—dotting the intervening sea. I know not when the view is lovelier,—when the fortress stands out dark against a rosy dawn, or when it glows red in the shafts of the setting sun.

All round this part of Tresco, on the waste lands, and at the edges of the sea, grow great bushes of the tree-mallow, or lavatera arborea, covered in summer with purple and mauve blossoms. (Is it as bad to talk of a "mauve mallow" as of a "pink pink" or a "violet violet"?)

When the seed-vessels are formed the rats will run up the woody stems, and eat the green "cheeses," as we used to call them as children. It is a pity all their tastes are not as innocent, for they are a menace to the young chickens, besides stealing eggs and robbing potato-sacks when they can. But I do not think there are any rats nowadays so voracious as those that Leland describes on Rat Island—rats that would think nothing of eating a live horse!

Here also are fringes of tamarisk, and other low trees, along the shore. St. Martin's men come over in boats and cut off the branches for making crab- and lobster-pots—"trimming our trees for us," as the Tresconians put it.

Of course every cottager has his patch of flowers. One may see the cut blossoms, in pots and bottles, set outside the cottage-doors,


Jessie Matheson

or in the windows, to open in the sunshine, before being sent to "England."

The Tresco flower-fields are, perhaps, on the whole, less picturesque than those on the other islands, on account of the careful way in which they are protected from winds and storms; but you may find many a cluster of narcissi of Nature's own planting, wayward ones that have preferred to choose their own shelter in the lee of a pile of grey rocks jutting out into the sea, or hidden in a little copse of trees by the shore—trees slender of girth and small of stature, and destined, like Peter Pan, never to grow up.

The northern part of Tresco is wild and rocky and uncultivated, with bare brown downs stretching across from shore to shore.

On the east, where these downs slope more gently towards the sea, there is the beautiful Gimble Bay, facing towards the islands of Menavawr, Round Island, St. Helen's, and Norwethel; and lying just outside the bay is the long reef known as Golden Ball Bar, over which the waves are ever breaking in flying foam and with the sound of thunder.

On the north the downs end abruptly in a steep and rock-bound coast. Here is a wonderful cavern, known as "Piper's Hole," which penetrates inland for a distance of above two hundred feet.

To enter it one has first to descend an iron ladder fixed to the rock, and then to clamber, bent double, along a dark passage, over large stone boulders, worn smooth by the action of the waves. At length the passage opens out into a cavern thirty-four feet high—plenty of room to stand upright now! Here there is a large pool of fresh water, on which a boat is kept during the summer, so that one can be ferried across it and land on the smooth beach of white sand at the far end of the cave.

It used to be said that this Piper's Hole communicated by a passage under the sea with the small and insignificant cave of the same name on St. Mary's; that men had entered there and never returned; but that dogs had successfully accomplished the journey, and had reappeared safely at Tresco, at the expense of most of their hair!

There are several other caves along the north

coast of Tresco, but none so large as Piper's Hole.

On the western edge of the downs there are the scanty ruins of Charles's Castle, which is probably the one described by Leland as "a lytle pyle or fortres."

As we stand by the ruins and look down we can see below us, on a ledge of rocks jutting out into the sea, our old friend Cromwell's Castle—a strong little tower, with walls twelve feet thick. The flooring and other woodwork of the interior have mostly disappeared, and what remains is green with damp; but the outer walls are just as strong as ever. The flat bomb-proof roof, once armed with a battery, is now overgrown with grass and brambles.

Beyond the Castle, in the midst of New Grimsby Sound, is a pile of rock known as Hangman's Island, because the Republican officers hanged a batch of mutinous soldiers there. The path from Cromwell's Castle southwards to New Grimsby lies close to the sea, parting a tangle of bracken and bramble; and there in the autumn may be found the finest blackberries that grow in the islands.

The sands on the east coast of Tresco, between the Block House and Skirt Point, are famous for their shells, especially for "guinea-moneys"—pretty little shells of the cowry shape, which are much sought after by Scillonians for making into necklaces. They are found in considerable numbers along this shore, but are nowhere so plentiful as not to require a careful search.

Bryher and Samson

XI

BRYHER AND SAMSON

BRYHER, with its five hills, is one of the prettiest of the islands. All Scillonians will tell you so, even those (and there are some) who have to confess that they have never been there!

There are about ninety inhabitants, of whom the greater number live in Bryher "town," as they will tell you it is called, with a half-apologetic smile at the importance of the name.

"You won't find this like Hugh Town," says, with a twinkle in his eye, the boatman who has brought me across, as he carries my luggage up the steep little street. "You'll find it pretty dark when you come home from the theayter at night."

There are only two houses in which one can stay on Bryher, and they stand side by side at the top of the hill. From their windows there

is a fascinating view of the Outer Islands, peaked and jagged barren rocks, standing out of the water, black and threatening; Maiden Bower, Seal Rock, Illiswilgig, Castle Bryher, and the rest.

At the northern end of Bryher is Shipman Head, a huge mass of rock, 100 feet high, the home of many sea-birds, and separated from the main island only by a narrow chasm, through which the sea whirls and eddies with great force. It is possible to jump across this chasm from Bryher on to a rock on Shipman Head at a slightly lower level; but it is not advisable to make the leap unless you do not wish to return, for jumping back again is quite another question!

In this part of the island is Hell Bay, so called from the terrific force of the sea during a high wind, and the many wrecks which have been washed ashore there. Most of these have struck on Scilly Rock, from which the whole group takes its name. This mighty mass of granite lies off to the west, nearly a mile outside Hell Bay. It is divided in two by a narrow channel, through which, in very calm weather, a small boat can be made to shoot.

It was here that the huge Atlantic liner, the "Minnehaha," of 13,400 tonnage, struck last April, as already described.

Some years ago two vessels struck there in one night. The first of these was a sailing-ship on her first voyage, carrying a cargo of rice and manned by a black crew, all of whom were saved by boats from Bryher. Being new, she did not quickly break up, and the light burning on her mast misled another and smaller vessel, and drew her to her destruction. Her cargo consisted of cocoanuts, thousands of which were washed up in Hell Bay and on the shores of Tresco, and were gathered into heaps to be sent to the mainland.

Yet another time a cotton-ship was wrecked, and Hell Bay was full of iron-bound bales of cotton.

It is a magnificent and awesome sight to watch the waves breaking in Hell Bay during rough weather. They mount with a mighty roar almost to the top of Shipman Head, flinging their spray high into the air, and falling back in foaming cataracts, only to renew their onslaught with still greater force.

This is the wildest and most barren part of Bryher. Farther south the hill-slopes are cultivated, and are sheeted with flowers in the spring, while their summits are crowned with gorse.

The oldest inhabitant of the islands lives on Bryher. Four years ago she passed her four-score years and ten, but she carries well her weight of years. She is known as "Aunt Charlotte," for on the off-islands they still follow more or less the custom noticed by Heath, of using "Aunt" and "Uncle" as nick-names, on account of the scarcity of surnames. And her son-in-law with whom she lives is "Uncle Sampy," named after the neighbouring island of Samson.

Aunt Charlotte can still remember the kelping days, but even the mists of seventy years have no power to cast a glamour over them.

There is excitement on Bryher just now, for an itinerant draper's shop has arrived in a barge, towed by the steam-launch. The draper has spread out his goods in Uncle Sampy's flower-house, and every one is flocking to take the rare chance of doing some shopping. The

glass-house is soon nearly as full (for its size) as a London shop at sale-time; and it is almost as gay as when it was stacked with flowers.

But instead of tiers of narcissi and daffodils, under the vine-leaves and climbing-roses there are rolls of white calico and scarlet flannel; straw hats of every colour of the rainbow, gay blouses, and a good display of toys for the children. To St. Mary's, St. Martin's, and Bryher, this floating shop is taken about three times in the year. On rocky little St. Agnes the draper dare not try to land, for fear of the risk of spoiling his goods, and Tresco is forbidden ground.

I shall not soon forget returning from Bryher one very stormy morning in a sailing-boat, sunk almost to the gunwale, for in addition to her load of flower-boxes, she carried a dead bullock, resolved into its component parts ready for sale on St. Mary's—which resolution had taken place in my landlady's kitchen the previous evening. As the boat tacked the cargo shifted from side to side, and parts of my fellow-passenger, sewn up in sacking, kept threatening to roll on the top of me. The waves dashed

continually over the sides, and in spite of the oil-skins with which the sailors covered me, I was drenched before I reached Hugh Town.

I have also vivid remembrances of the toughness of my fellow-passenger when I had a piece of him for dinner that evening.

The island of Samson, with its two conical hills, makes a good mark for seamen. It was formerly inhabited, but by 1855 the late Governor had by degrees removed to St. Martin's and St. Mary's the few families whom he found living there. Some of them objected strongly to being moved, and one old man barricaded himself in his cottage, and vowed he would shoot any one who interfered with him. But he had to go in the end.

Various reasons are given for this action on the part of the Governor. It is said that the inhabitants were quarrelling amongst themselves, and were better separated; that the younger men having left the island, those who remained were getting too old to manage the boats and make a living; also, that there being no school on Samson, the children could not be properly educated.

To-day the principal inhabitants are black rabbits; but the ruins of several houses may still be seen. One of them is known as "Armorel's Cottage," after the heroine of Sir Walter Besant's novel, *Armorel of Lyonnesse.* It stands, a mere shell, roofless and crumbling, at the foot of the southern hill. Bracken and bramble have encroached on all sides, within and without, blocking up the doorway and leaving no traces of a floor. An elder and a tamarisk alone show where the cottage-garden used to be.

It is a pretty spot for a home, on the edge of the narrow plain which connects Samson's two hills, with a full sight of the sea and of the neighbouring islands on the right and on the left. Now the ground is covered with wild violets and the air is heavy with the scent of the gorse; later, when summer comes, tall foxgloves will rise in battalions from the midst of the fresh green bracken, which as yet shows nothing but tiny tender spirals above the dark earth.

It is twenty years since Besant's book was written, but still you may see new-comers to

Scilly clasping each his copy of *Armorel.* The original of "Peter the boy" is still living on St. Mary's, and is still known as Peter, though that is not his real name. Still he answers to Besant's description, looking no older, probably, than twenty years ago. He had a terrible blow on the head from the crane of a steamer, which knocked him insensible, and after that all his hair fell out, and never would grow again. But the accident had one happy result: he had been subject to fits, and this blow on the head worked a complete cure! It is such a simple though drastic remedy, that all doctors and surgeons ought to know of it!

The "girl" who is credited with having been the original of Armorel, for the sole reason that she was the last girl to live on Samson, was married and in the North of England long before Besant came to Scilly. With most unreasonable annoyance, she declared she would scratch his eyes out if ever she met him, thus proving that she had no resemblance in character to the Armorel of fiction. As for "Peter," he was "noways particular," to use his own expression.



Not far from Armorel's Cottage there are the ruins of an ancient building, which is supposed to have been a church; but as to when and how it was built, and to whom dedicated, who can tell?

St. Agnes

XII

ST. AGNES

IF you want to visit the little island of St. Agnes, you had better choose a fairly calm day, for the coast is so rocky that in rough weather it is not easy to land.

There are two ways of getting there from St. Mary's: either in your own hired sailing-boat, when you can choose your own time; or else you can be "delivered with the mails" by the steam-launch, in which case you must be ready for starting soon after the arrival of the steamer from Penzance. Very energetic people can also go in the launch when she fetches the mails, leaving St. Mary's at 6.30 in the morning.

The launch is naturally more independent of the weather than the sailing-boats, but even she has been known to come to grief in a high

gale, and has been ignominiously towed in by a trawler; and if you do venture out in her when there is a lot of sea on, she may take up or land her mails and yet refuse to run the risk of landing *you*. Mails can be thrown, but you cannot; and her dinghy does not long keep its coat of royal blue paint amongst the rocks around St. Agnes.

The whole past history of this island is one of a series of shipwrecks; and we cannot wonder at this when we see the gaunt and grim monsters that lie in wait for storm-driven or befogged vessels to the west and south-west. The very names of some of them are significant: Hellweathers, Old Wreck Ledge, Tearing Ledge, and the Crim Rocks (I am told that "crim" in Cornish means a creeping, trembling, shuddering feeling, as from fear).

But who would ever expect to be wrecked on islets bearing the innocent names of Daisy and Great and Little Rose? And yet these rocks have also had their toll of human lives; in fact, there is scarcely one but serves as tombstone to some poor fellow—a tombstone which has brought him to the grave it marks.

Heath makes a quaint comment on the frequency of wrecks near this island; "which," says he, "makes the Inhabitants of it some Amends for their Forlornness of Abode."

There are stories that in the old days the islanders recognised so keenly the value of this "Amends" that they would drop propitiatory pins down St. Warna's Well, praying to her to "send a wreck before morning." This Saint, who is said to have come all the way from Ireland in a coracle of wicker and hides, was supposed to be instrumental in sending the wrecks, and generally to preside over and direct the good fortune of the islanders. She seems a much more suitable patron-saint for the stormy little island than the meek St. Agnes with her lamb. But how came this bold adventurous dame to be accredited with such a weakness for pins?

There are stories still more sinister; of ships lured to their destruction by false lights; of a lantern tied between the horns of a cow to lead mariners astray by its wandering gleam; and of other devices of the devotees of St. Warna, who evidently believed in the maxim

of Æschylus, that the gods help those who help themselves. But whatever strange and wild doings there may have been in the past, nowadays none are more ready than the men of St. Agnes to risk their own lives in endeavouring to save others.

They have a life-boat of their own, which is launched from a slip just below the church —a slip which they claim to be the longest in the world!

The lighthouse is much the oldest in the islands, and one of the oldest in the British Isles, having been built in 1680; and never was lighthouse more needed than here. It forms a good day-mark by its dazzling whiteness, as well as a guiding-star by night. Until 1790 it was lighted merely by a coal-fire, which was sometimes allowed to go out; but since then its brilliant revolving light has been obtained by means of oil-lamps and reflectors. There is some talk of its needing much repair, and of its being replaced by a new lighthouse on Peninnis.

In past times the inhabitants of St. Agnes were frequently cut off from all communication

with the outer world for weeks together, and had to depend very much on their own resources. They had to grind their own corn with round stone hand-mills, or "querns," and often they ran short of bread altogether, and had to make up with potatoes. They had no fuel but the dried bracken, fetched in boat-loads from the neighbouring isle of Annet, unless a chance wreck provided them with firewood; and fish-oil and seal-oil, prepared by themselves, were all they had for artificial light. One old lady stills speaks feelingly of the privations of her early days. "I never could abide potatoes for breakfast," she says, "but there was often nothing else to be had." The seals' blubber for candles was boiled down out of doors, for the smell was too abominable to have in the houses. Seals weighing six or seven hundredweight and "nearly as big as bullocks" have been caught round the islands. Nowadays any that are caught are sold to the Governor at 5s. a head, large and small alike.

Early potatoes are still grown on St. Agnes for export, and now a good deal of business is also done with the flowers.

As the launch draws near the landing-place in Perconger during the flower-season, you may see a long string of carts and barrows following each other down the hill to the sea-shore. These contain the wooden boxes of flowers which are to be loaded on the barge and towed back to St. Mary's ready for the next day's steamer.

We found very comfortable quarters on the island with the wife of the pilot's son who so distinguished himself when the "T. W. Lawson" was wrecked, as described in another chapter. The accompanying illustration shows their little three-year-old girl trying to help her parents in the tying-house.

The very names on St. Agnes seem to be suggestive of the wild and rocky character of the island—names such as Camperdizl Point, Campergurling, and the Carns of Kestillier.

And is not Wingletang Down a picturesque and suggestive name?

A heather-clad stretch of open down, dotted with bushes of "whin," or gorse, and with a fringe of "tang," or seaweed, washed up all round it; great boulders of granite strewn over



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its surface, and bare patches of the living rock showing here and there through the soil—that is Wingletang Down, in the middle of which stands the strange rock called the Giant's Punch-bowl.

In the sands of the little bay at the edge of the down it is the custom to search for beads, just as one searches for beads in the sands of the Egyptian desert. But these are not mummy-beads! only wreck-salvage from a vessel that was lost over two hundred years ago, and its wreckage was washed up in what has since been called "Beady Pool."

On Wingletang Down one may, perhaps, see large blocks of granite drilled with rows of holes ready for quarrying. Until recent times the blocks were severed by driving wooden pegs into these holes, and wetting them until their swelling forced the stone asunder;—just the same method as was used in ancient Egypt thousands of years ago! Nowadays slips of steel take the place of the wooden pegs.

The bay on the south of St. Agnes is known as Santa Warna Bay, because there, according

to tradition, the Saint put in, in her little coracle, on her arrival from Ireland. On its shore is Santa Warna's Well, now an insignificant little hole almost choked with dead bracken and weeds, and half-covered with a flat stone, but once considered the most important spot in the island. For, formerly, every year on the day after Twelfth Day, the well was cleaned out by the islanders and devotion paid to the Saint. This was still done in Heath's time, and he says they used "certain superstitious ceremonies in their thanksgiving, which being ended they make a general feasting and rejoicing throughout the island." It was here that, in the old wild days, the young girls used to come on foggy nights, before going to bed, and drop pins down the well, chanting,

> "Good-night, father; good-night, mother;
> Good-night, friends and foes;
> God send a ship ashore before morning."

There is a tradition that the destruction by drowning of the entire population of St. Agnes,

as recorded by Leland in the sixteenth century, was a judgment on a long course of wrecking.

The little church of St. Agnes stands by Priglis Bay, which is sometimes called Pericles Bay, and is supposed to be a corruption of Portus Ecclesiæ. Scillonians have a way of softening the sound of words; thus Porth is nearly always reduced to Per; so it is easy to see how Portus Ecclesiæ became Priglis.

Leland says there was a chapel here in his time, from which the island took its name. This is supposed to have been beaten down by the Parliamentary forces. It lay in ruins many years, and then, on the same spot and with the same materials, was built a dwelling-house, which was washed away by a high tide in 1744. People still living in 1794 could remember having seen the chancel arch of the old church standing, built of fine freestone, in the same way as the arches in the ruins of Tresco Abbey church.

Another church was built in 1685, with salvage money received for saving a French vessel. This fell into decay, and was replaced by the present building early in the last century.

Just outside the church wall the men of St. Agnes make and stack their crab-pots. One may sometimes see a mountain of these creels piled up by the life-boat slip, and a group of men hard at work making more ; others, perhaps, standing by and looking on with their hands in their pockets ; waiting, with the unequalled patience of the fisherman, for some job to turn up.

Whenever there is a fog in the islands, whether by day or night, you will hear every five minutes a loud booming roar, like the report of a gun, sounding across the sea from the south-west. This warning comes from the Bishop Lighthouse, four and a half miles from St. Agnes, and is caused by the explosion of "tonite," a kind of gun-cotton. It serves to warn off ships when the light is quite hidden in the dense fogs, which sometimes last for days.

Think what it must be for those men in the lighthouse to have this roar sounding close to their ears every five minutes for days together!

The Bishop Lighthouse is the tallest in the world, besides being one of the most exposed



CRAB-POT-MAKING BY ST. AGNES CHURCH

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in situation. The first attempt to build a tower on this rock was made in 1849, but before the building was complete a heavy sea swept away the wrought-iron rods and columns of which it was formed.

A masonry tower was next built, and finished in 1859. It was 120 feet high, but even at this height the sea would actually be breaking over the lantern for many hours together during a heavy gale; so after a time the tower was encased with additional masonry, and raised to its present height of 167 feet. It sways like a tree in the wind during one of the terrific storms which sometimes beat upon it.

Altogether there are seven sea-lights to be seen gleaming out round the islands after night has fallen. There is this, of the Bishop, away among the western rocks; the strong white light of St. Agnes; the ruby glow from Round Island; the light-ship moored by the Seven Stones; the "Wolf" Lighthouse, half-way between Scilly and the mainland; and the lights of Longships and Pendeen, off the Cornish coast.

St. Martin's and its Neighbours

XIII

ST. MARTIN'S AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

NOWHERE do the flowers bloom so early as on the sunny southern slopes of St. Martin's Isle; and as one draws near from St. Mary's one may see the varied colours of the flower-patches, from palest lemon through all the shades of yellow down to deep orange, clothing the face of the hills.

It is a great advantage to St. Martin's, this long series of slopes on the south, facing towards the roadstead, warm and sunny and sheltered. At one time the drifting sand from the flats had so covered the soil as to make much of it barren, but it seems fertile enough now. The sand-flats extend for a mile in the direction of St. Mary's, and at very low water of a spring-tide it is possible to walk across them, and to wade through the remaining mile of separating water.

The Eastern Islands are well seen from the flowery slopes. They run in pairs of "Great" and "Little"—Ganilly, Ganinick, Arthur, and Innisvouls—there is a Great and a Little of each. Hanjague, the "Sugar-loaf" island, away to the very east, stands quite alone—in name, and character, and situation. I remember being asked by a boatman soon after I first came to Scilly whether I knew "Ann Jigg." I knew the sugar-loaf well by sight and its name on paper, but the orthodox pronunciation was strange to me, and I replied with puzzlement that I had never met the lady!

The northern slopes of St. Martin's, exposed to all the fury of the Atlantic gales, are almost uncultivated, possessing one little flower-farm only, at Pernagie. On this coast, "at the back of St. Martin's," there are caves which were formerly thought to be old tin-workings.

It is a wild and beautiful and lonely coast, with rounded bays, shut in by rocky headlands, and slopes clad with heather and gorse between the patches of bare grey granite. The bold mass of St. Martin's Head is nearly the highest point of the islands, and from it what old

Leland calls "the very westeste point of Cornwalle," can often be clearly seen. The Cornish hills are plainly visible on a very clear day, even from an open boat in the roads.

On the summit of St. Martin's Head is the "Day-mark," built in 1683 by Thomas Ekins, the first steward of the Godolphins to reside on the islands. It is a round tower with a conical top, painted all the way up with alternate bands of white and Indian red, and it is quite the most hideous object to be seen in Scilly! But we must forgive its ugliness, for no doubt it has done good service to seamen in times past; and though the neighbouring lighthouse on Round Island has made it less necessary, still it is a "land-mark," and as such it must remain. It was used as a signal-station in the last French War, a century ago; near by are ruins of the houses occupied by the soldiers.

These downs around St. Martin's Head are beautiful in their autumn garb of purple; they are no less beautiful in the spring, when the heather forms a carpet of velvety-brown, here slightly greenish, there again rich as burnt-

sienna in colour, with bushes of gorse scattered about upon it; and around them always lies the blue and emerald circle of the sea.

St. Martin's men are great potters, and divide their time between this work and farming. Piloting used to occupy them a great deal; and still standing all along the shore, but fast falling into ruin, are the rows of sheds where the pilot-boats were kept.

White Island, the most northerly of the Scillies and a wild, weird spot, can be reached on foot from St. Martin's at low tide. It contains yet a third "Piper's Hole," better known as "Underland Girt," a dark and gloomy chasm, frequented by sea-birds.

There are three little rocks off the south coast of St. Martin's, which bear the sinister name of "The Three Damned Sinners." One can fancy that the name goes back to the time when superstition was rife in the islands, and when it was thought that the spirits of the ship-wrecked who had done evil in this life would never rest; and the shrieking and skirling of birds around these rocks would have been attributed to the yelling of restless spirits, till

the rocks themselves came to be called after them.

I do not know why it is, but St. Martin's seems to be less visited than the other islands. It certainly is not less attractive, and those who go there soon find that it has a charm of its own. Its inhabitants are very proud of their island, and very willing to give a welcome to strangers.

There is at least one man on St. Martin's who has never been to the mainland, and to whom motor-cars and trains would be a great novelty. For motor-cars are never seen in Scilly except in the form of wreck-salvage! And trains are, of course, unknown. But perhaps he would as resolutely refuse to be surprised as the sturdy Scillonian, who, on his first visit to England, would only say, "Everything is very like Scilly, only bigger, and more of 'em."

St. Helen's Island lies off to the north-west of St. Martin's; but St. Helen has by rights neither part nor lot in this island which bears her name. It appears to have been originally dedicated to St. Elidius, who, as William of

Worcester tells us, was buried in Scilly, and very likely on this island.

In Leland's time the name had been shortened to St. Lide's, and the sex of the Saint was already forgotten, for he speaks of "Saynct Lides Isle, wher yn tymes past at *her* sepulchre was gret superstition."

St. Elidius was Bishop of Llandaff in the sixth century, and during the yellow plague he went to stay in Brittany with his friend, St. Sampson, the Bishop of Dol, to whom the neighbouring island of Samson is dedicated. He was in his old age called Elios, "for that his doctrine shone like the sun." This name, St. Elios, appears to have become, by different stages, St. Teilo, St. Dillo, and St. Dellan, whence it easily passed into St. Helen.

Dr. Borlase mentions a church on St. Helen's as the most ancient Christian building in Scilly. He thus describes it as it stood in 1756:—

"It consists of a South Isle, 31 feet 6 inches long, by 14 feet 3 inches wide, from which two arches, low and of uncouth style, open into a North Isle, 12 feet wide by 19 feet 6 inches long. There are two windows in each Isle;

near the Eastern window in the North Isle projects a flat stone, to support, I suppose, the image of the saint."

Little but the foundations of the church can now be traced, which is all the more to be regretted, since it probably dated back to the eighth century, or earlier. Many of the stones were taken away early in the last century, to build a garden wall for a naval officer stationed in the island.

St. Helen's Pool was appointed the quarantine station in 1756. The Council of Scilly had appealed two years before that it might be made so, in the stead of New Grimsby Sound, where the presence of infected persons was a great source of danger to the inhabitants of Tresco and Bryher. The Pest-house on St. Helen's, standing deep in bracken, is now in a state of ruin, and it is hardly safe to enter on account of the falling of slates through holes in the roof. It seems a gruesome sort of place to have been used by picnic-parties, but in its better days, we are told, they often boiled their kettles in the hospital ward!

Rats abound on St. Helen's, as a foolish pair

of honeymooners discovered when they went to spend the night there a short time ago. In the morning they found their basket of provisions had been quite emptied by the rats, "and it's a wonder the rats had not eaten them up to," said she who told the tale.

Not far from the Pest-house there is a deep well of water; and the surface of the island is scattered thick with limpet-shells —two facts which may seem to have little connection, but which I have reason to associate.

We had come to St. Helen's by sailing-boat, and I was preparing to sketch Round Island from the northern shore when I found my water-bottle was empty. This was a great damper, for the water in the old well was much too far down to be reached without a rope. But we happened to notice the limpet-shells. There had been a heavy shower in the night, and every little shell was brimful of rain water, so by collecting a number of them and straining out the dead ants, my wants were easily supplied.

We wondered whether modern scientists

might not consider this decoction of ants a likely cure for rheumatism, on account of the formic acid it must have contained!

There are fine views of Round Island and Menavawr from St. Helen's, the best that can be had, unless one went quite close in a boat, and this is only possible in very calm weather.

Menavawr, with its three jagged peaks, is one of the grandest of the barren rocks, and towers up to a height of 140 feet, on one side almost sheer from the sea. It is cleft with two channels, the wider of which, like that which divides the Scilly Rock, can be navigated, with great care, after a long spell of calm weather.

The name means simply "Great rock," from the Celtic "men," a rock, and "vawr," great; but it has been corrupted to "Man-o'-War," from a fancied resemblance to a ship in full sail, aud this is the only pronunciation one ever hears.

It is but a barren rock, but it is wondrously beautiful. It is seamed and scored and weather-worn with thousands of lines and markings, and touched with many tints of colour, which make

it look in the sunshine like a mighty precious stone with the light gleaming on its facets.

And round this opalescent jewel the sea-birds are ever whirling and skirling, and flying in and out of its crannied sides; and round it, too, the sea is ever dashing and foaming, as the waves chase each other through the channels that divide it.

Round Island, less than a century ago, was described as "utterly inaccessible," and "truly appalling"; but now, with a turn of Fortune's wheel, its character is quite different. For more than twenty years it has had a claim to be reckoned as one of the inhabited islands, since two men are always living on its rocky summit. They are the keepers of the lighthouse, which flashes forth its ruby light as soon as darkness begins to fall.

Scarcely a blade of grass will grow on this barren rock; and it is said that the few rabbits which exist there have learnt to gnaw bones like a dog, on account of the scarcity of other food.

One hundred and sixty rough-hewn steps lead up to the top of the island, but even with this artificial aid it is not an easy ascent.



Compared with the Bishop, this is a paradise to live upon; for the men have plenty of room to walk about on the rock, instead of being always confined in a slender tower, and the storms do not assail them with such terrifying violence.

Conclusion

XIV

CONCLUSION

TO-MORROW we leave for the mainland, and how shall we spend this our last day, precious as last things nearly always are?

It is a lovely day, with a clear, pure sky, and just enough breeze to ruffle the sea into crisp little waves, and make it wear its many-twinkling smile. Just the day for sailing in and out amongst the islands for the last time; but not one upon which we may venture beyond the roads; for round the outer rocks we can see the foam surging high, and making broken white lines along the surface of the sea.

So we will go sailing within the roadstead, and take a last look at the islands from this sheltered inner side.

How sorry we are to take leave of them

all! Of St. Mary's, which with every visit has come to feel more home-like, where nearly every face we meet now seems to look familiar and friendly, and where the bustle and stir of life seem in comparison so very great when we return to it from one of the off-islands!

For there is always some small excitement going on at Hugh Town.

One day it is a French fisherman who has been seized by the "Argus," the little man-of-war that lies in wait for poachers. He has been found fishing within the three-mile limit, and is punished, perhaps, by a fine and the confiscation of his fish.

Another time it is the arrival of a vessel from Scandinavia, laden with wood for flower-boxes. She is an antique Dutch scow, in shape like a flat-iron, and with a hold like the bottomless pit, out of which are emptied two hundred tons of wood, all ready cut into tops and bottoms and sides, and needing only to be nailed together. She comes waddling in one Sunday morning long after she was expected, having been delayed by bad weather; and there is a fine row with the captain, who has

left too much of his cargo at the Channel Islands en route, and now wants to receive full pay in Scilly for a deficient supply. But Scillonians know better! Or there is the arrival of the crew of a steam-drifter, which has struck on Gorregan in a fog. The men, fifteen in number, and natives of Brittany, got off in their small boat, and when daylight dawned were rescued by St. Agnes islanders. They are thoroughly enjoying themselves now that their painful experience is over. Clothes were lent to them temporarily on St. Agnes, but now they must be reclothed by the agents of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, and it is amusing to see them being trotted round in a body to be outfitted. There are not enough coats and waistcoats to go round, but this does not matter at all. They revel in exhibiting their gorgeous embroidered braces, and their feet, encased in bran-new leather boots, probably for the first time in their lives.

These are just typical everyday happenings; but now and then there is some big event, which stirs the islands to their depths.

So who could ever find the islands dull?

Who indeed could be dull, with such a sea on which to sail, with such free and lonely downs on which to roam, and such a wealth of islands to explore! Only those, I think, who pack their dulness in their portmanteaus and carry it with them wherever they go.

And now we must say goodbye to it all. First we will sail to Tresco and take leave of the few friends we have made there. One of them gives us as a parting gift a bunch of Cynosures—"Shiny-shores," *she* calls them; and surely a more poetical name for this lovely golden narcissus than the one it really bears—"dog's tail," if we carry it back to its original meaning.

To Bryher next, just to gather a few early buds of sea-pink from the downs by Hell Bay, and to wave farewell to those we know who live in Bryher Town.

It is as we are flying merrily along to St. Martin's that I remember I have made no sketch of this sailing-boat on which we have spent so many happy hours. And yet she is a thing of beauty, and well deserves recording. Is it too late now? Perhaps not.



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Did you ever try to make a sketch of a sailing-boat in full sail from the very doubtful vantage-ground of the dinghy attached behind —with the painter let out to its fullest extent to give you sufficient distance? If you ever do anything so foolish (I admit it was foolish), I would advise you to persuade all your weightiest friends to accompany you; for so your cockleshell would gain a little in steadiness, and dance a little less lightly on the waves. And then, perhaps, your brush-strokes would not so often be made half an inch or more from where you meant them to be! In my case the forepart of the boat rose high out of the water, at intervals bobbing down with a splash, and I had the opportunity of trying the effect of a mixture of salt water with my paints.

I have heard a story of a lady who said, in describing a certain painting made on the Mississippi, "I know it *must* be like the place, for the man who painted it had made his colours out of the earths from the very river-banks he was painting." On this principle sea-water *must* be the proper medium for painting the sea!

We must not stop long at St. Martin's, for time is going fast, so we will content ourselves with climbing to the top of Cruther's Hill above the pier, and letting our eyes, instead of our feet, roam over the island once more.

And now to St. Agnes, which has a special corner in our hearts. So we will sail all round it, for the wind has slightly dropped, and get a glimpse of every part before we land in Perconger.

A flying visit to the lighthouse top, to look down once more on the fields and gardens, rocks and headlands of the little isle; a scamper over Wingletang Down, with the fresh sea-breeze in our faces; and a last peep at the little lonely church by the shore. That is all there is time for, if we wish to reach St. Mary's before dark. And packing still to be done!

As we sail homeward, looking back we can discern on the Gugh that strange and fearful-looking rock, the Kittern, also called the Turk's Head; fearful-looking, I say, because its shape recalls to me so strongly Watts' dreadful Minotaur, crushing the life out of the innocent, as he overlooks the sea.

How can I end on such a note as that! It is but a strange and idle fancy that has come into my head; and there is nothing gloomy about the islands to justify it.

Here is something which is much more typical of them, our boatman's two small—very small—sons, who have come down to the quay to "help" anchor the boat. Their bright faces are full of light and life and sparkle, like the islands bathed in noonday sunshine, and encircled with "the innumerable laughter of the sea."

They are true children of their island-home; their joyous freedom finds an echo in the joyous freedom of the Life around them; in the spirit of the wild sea-birds; in the leaping, restless, shimmering waves; in the fresh sweet breezes that blow across the downs; and not least in those dancing myriads of flowers, flowers, flowers; those "hosts in the sunshine," sent, as God's messengers, "to set our hearts free.'

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